

Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—II

by AUGUSTUS JOHN

WILDE AT OXFORD

by A. J. A. SYMONS

THE THIRD SECRETARY'S STORY

by TOM HOPKINSON

RE-INTRODUCING COSTALS

by CATHERINE ANDRASSY

HORIZON'S QUESTIONNAIRE

POEMS *by* W. H. AUDEN, BRIAN READE,
AND K. J. RAINE

DRAWINGS *by* HUMPHREY SPENDER
AND STEPHEN TENNANT

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PEGGY SUTTON
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(Formerly of 54 Inverness Terrace,
W.2)

COMMENT

As the war goes on, intolerance increases. It is important for those of us who accept the war to realize that everything which pacifists predict about war may be happening to us. Huxley went away to America because he was convinced that England would become Fascist in its struggle with Fascism, that the surgeon would die of his patient's illness. He was convinced that the end could not justify the means, that since war cannot be waged without discipline it brings the end of democracy, for the hatred and intolerance behind the discipline destroy the spiritual values behind democracy. In the Spanish War this was nearly true. The government, liberal and progressive, with the aid of the Communist Party, who were more disciplined, reasonable, and enlightened than any other, ended by becoming almost indistinguishable from their oppressors.

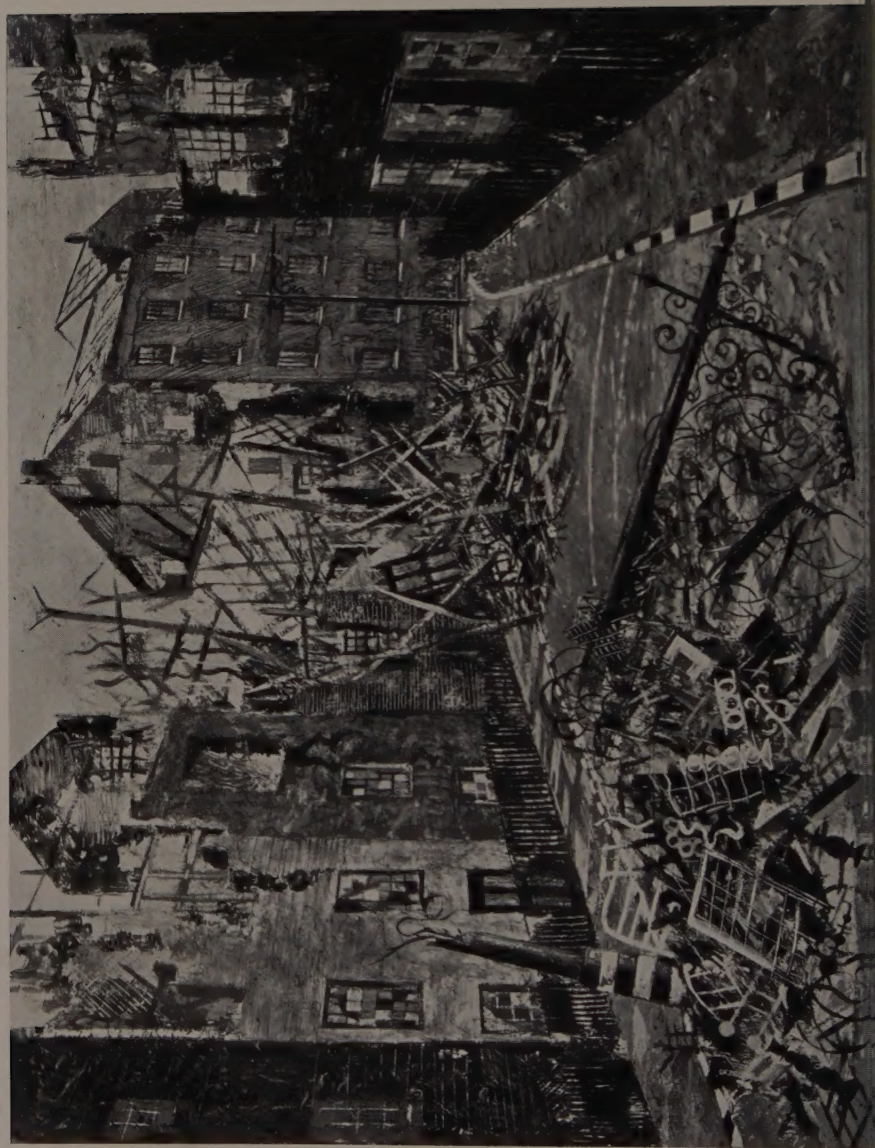
The lessons from the Spanish War have never been properly drawn—they are almost enough to confirm Huxley—but not quite—for even the wretched rump of die-hard Stalinists who were fighting to the end, and shooting those who would not fight, represented, however unrecognizably, something that might grow and flower to liberty again. The Spanish War was, politically, far in advance of this war; it is as if it were a dream of the future, and this is the present, and it is a dream which will come true, because we must re-fight the Spanish War just as we are re-fighting the Abyssinian War and re-fighting the last war. We must fight all the wars which we did not fight at the time. They come up like the cold porridge the child refuses, till he is forced to swallow it. There are more wars than there are battlefields, which must be booked in advance: Sedan, Adowa, Marathon, Ebro, Badajoz, Poitiers, Mohacs—we have not heard the last of them.

There is no mystery about the Spanish War. It was won by the side which had the most guns, tanks, and aeroplanes, and the discipline to use them. That was the side supplied by Germany and Italy, since France and England refused to adopt the other and therefore left its provisioning to Mexico and Russia. Both sides were split in two by a revolutionary party (Falange and Anarchists) and a moderate party (Monarchists and Republicans); in fact, both were split over the question of whether it was better to

have a war and a revolution at the same time, or whether it was necessary first to win the war and then get on with the revolution. On the government side the Communists supported the moderate parties because (a) the anarchist conception of revolution was repugnant to them, (b) because the only chance of adequate help from the democracies lay in the victory of legitimate government and moderation. The democracies, however, were unconvinced, nor was the government ever able to enforce complete unity on its own side. On Franco's side the position was clearer. Franco thrust some kind of discipline and unity on the Carlists and Falange, though after his victory the Falange have increased their power. He won the war first and then permitted his Fascist revolution. Whether the Republic could have won had it reversed its policy, and fought the war on a clear revolutionary issue is doubtful. It would have gained in morale and lost in armaments, and modern armaments win wars to-day, not revolutionary hope and faith. From the moment that Blum failed to help Azaña in the weeks that followed Franco's rising, the cause of the Spanish Government grew more difficult and desperate. For those who sympathized with the government the Spanish War was a ghastly tragedy in three acts, 1936, 1937, 1938. The people who acquired freedom in one summer day, who sang in the streets and called each other comrade, suffered and starved and were gradually deprived of the liberty, the courage, the hope, and the culture which they had tasted, until the faith which had carried them to the front in their painted trains expired in the camps of Argelès where they were wired in pens like baboons and left to rot in the sand. The condition of the victors was hardly better, and it would seem that two years after the war is over the side who won has less to eat than when they were engaged in fighting.

The Spanish War was a pre-view of this one. Here are four deductions from it:

1. One has only to imagine how the Greeks would fare if they were divided up into Greek Anarchists, Greek Communists, Greek Trotskyites, Greek left- and right-wing Socialists, Peloponnesian Separatists, and Republican Liberals, all arming separately and campaigning against each other in the three distinct capitals - Athens, Patras, and Salonika, to realize the madness of fundamental disunity in wartime.



2. Wars are reactionary and unjust, and however moral the issues involved, if war is chosen as the lesser of two evils, it can only be won with a modicum of injustice and reaction.

3. A tree in winter, however bare, is not necessarily a dead tree. Most of the leaves of liberty and boughs of democracy were shed in the last war, but they grew again, and history is full of cases where the means has not conditioned the end, where dictators have been adopted by free peoples and been deposed, often by their own request. War and cruelty engender war and cruelty, they also engender satiety, which is a most powerful emotion; the religious wars of the seventeenth century give birth to the tolerance of the eighteenth; the crimes of Octavian are dissolved in the serenity of Augustus: while criticism and vigilance exist, the ideas behind democracy, whatever disguise it be forced by total war to adopt, remain in abeyance, but undestroyed.

4. A reflexion often made by Spanish peasants was that what the world needed was a little more humanity, *un poco mas humanidad*; this is so obvious as to seem hardly worth repeating, yet it is the crux of the world situation. Unless human beings can realize that humanity is sacred they will exterminate themselves; human life is the only life still capable of evolving; if we disdain the responsibility of evolution, and deny the mysterious power of which we are the repository, we will vanish, like the dinosaur, from a world where we are too incompetent to maintain ourselves.

The Spanish War was fought in a tyranny of Isms: men killed and died for their Ism. Let this war be the end of the Ism, and serve to recreate from the humanity which is still so evident in small affairs and personal contacts a basis for future ideas of government. The Ism is a creation of the human mind which dominates its creator with a logic of its own until the common-love and commonsense of humanity are destroyed by it. The love of power excludes the love of humanity, so does the love of order or of rigid intellectual systems, so that those at the top must be constantly irrigated from below. War has made us human and practical. We must enforce that change for the better, or be exterminated.

Last month we have observed some of the ravages of the Ism in Art. In the *New Statesman* intellectuals have been indulging in the

pleasure of Passing the Hair Shirt, the B.B.C. were involved in the assumption of the posthumous and retrospective illegality of the People's Convention. There is a tendency to condemn the art of artists who do not conform to standards of national pride, moral conduct and political orthodoxy, which, if it develops, will shrivel even the writers who have least to fear from it. The writers of the thirties will not be reproached, as Calder Marshall in the *Statesman* seemed to think, for having done so little to avert the war. Writers were not very influential under the Chamberlain regime, but they did what they could. They are more likely to be criticized for their love of publicity and lack of vocation, for the kind of windy vacuum which they manufactured in which to inflate each other, for the amount of energy expended in build-ups or useful quarrels, or in working up movements and group exhibitionism. Like the Aga Khan, they sold their bath water. The aggressive instinct is capable of producing some fine literature, but most polemics are inferior to the art produced by meditation or the love of beauty, and the spate of journalism and pamphleteering which is still rising is sweeping much of our talent away.

* * * * *

The *Horizon* questionnaire brought up many points about writers and writing with which there is no space to deal. There is room, however, to counter some of the dislikes.

(1) Indecision, inconsistency, waveringness of Comments: The charge is admitted. *Comment* makes no pretence to be decided or consistent, it is the reflection of a monthly mood, often post-influenzal, and not of a planned policy. Being interested in discovering the truth it wavers, and so tests the attraction of opposites. Supporting the war, yet seeing nearly all true values endangered by it, *Comment* can neither express the bluff certainties of the fighting man, nor the irresponsible assurance of those who are convinced the war is not worth fighting, nor take refuge, as do so many intellectuals, in putting their certainties into the future when the war is over.

It would be much pleasanter not to waver, to see the war as vigorously as Churchill or Bevin, and pump adrenalin into these paragraphs, or to hate it like Ponsonby or Palme-Dutt and enjoy the underdog pleasures of satire and guerrilla warfare, but, since

Horizon can neither believe that the only good Jerry is a dead Jerry, nor that the British Empire is fundamentally wicked, it must say so. 'Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our ask.'

Obscurity and Inequality of Poetry. This is not the fault of *Horizon*. Contemporary poetry is obscure because the relationship is unclassified between the poet and modern society. When *Horizon* can find simple poems it prints them, but the poems will often seem unequal, because those who like Dylan Thomas or W. R. Rodgers may not like Andrew Young, and vice versa.

Extracts from Books. Some readers object to essays which are taken from forthcoming books. It is very hard to get good critical essays, and those which are written specially for *Horizon* appear in book form later, so there seems no objection to reversing the process. Extracts from novels are barred, but when the extract is complete in itself (*Boys' Weeklies: Byron in Venice*) the practice will be continued.

Art, Music, Cinema, etc. There is no space in *Horizon* for chronicles of the arts, but a series of planned articles relating to the various arts are now in preparation, beginning with 'Modern American Painters' by John Rothenstein.

Short Stories. The short stories in *Horizon* are not intended to be masterpieces. The day of the great short story is over, because there are too few authors who are capable of reducing life to the proportions and unities of that small space. But there are still many very readable short stories, often written by beginners who have had beginner's luck, and who have not yet come up against the real problems and difficulties of the form, and these we print for their vitality and as comic relief.

Book Reviews. Here again space is too short. *Horizon* aims at giving its readers what cannot be found anywhere else, and so sacrifices the book reviews to the critical essay. Thus Hemingway's new novel is being reviewed with Malraux in an essay on these two novelists of the Spanish War by Arturo Barea.

Correspondence. Only occasionally can *Horizon* find room for letters, and only for letters which contribute to the policy of presenting both sides and helping readers to decide the truth. It must always be remembered that *Horizon* cannot get sufficient paper to expand, and therefore for everything that goes in something else is excluded.

Topicality, Catholicity, etc. The advantages of this doubting phase of our policy is that the magazine is open to many points of view. It also tries to keep a balance between English, French and American culture, and between the present and the past. Thus the last number included two long topical articles written by young people, and dealt with France and America. In this number we find the range of the nineties: John's autobiography, Symonds, Wilde, and Hopkinson's short story are revaluations of the days before the last war. There is a fascination about the youth of romantic writers, there is also a great similarity: reading about the handsome, extraordinarily sensitive, deeply affectionate, generous, touchy, omnivorous and precocious boys like Byron, Wilde and Proust, they seem, before disillusion has taught them how to bite, to merge into the same person. Wilde, a second-rate artist because he flinched from suffering, until it was thrust upon him, is fascinating as a character because he seems from the beginning to invite his fate. Beneath the worldly and lovable shell is his compulsion to be caught out and broken; to love pleasure in to fear pain, and yet Wilde obscurely desired the tragic limelight. He is like those murderers who are compelled to leave a clue that hangs them, or to taunt the police, and he is like many of us who are not murderers.

LETTERS

DEAR SIR,

It seems to me that Mr. MacNeice's *copia verborum* on expatriates side-steps the real issue: and this is surely the question which he himself asks, but fails conclusively to answer. Are these gentlemen more useful to England in America than if they returned to this country?

The problem is not one that can be judged by its effect on them or their work, which, against the background of what is at stake, doesn't matter a damn. And this is where Mr. MacNeice falls down; for he must realize, of course, that if England loses the war the chance of these writers being able to carry on their work for long, even in America, is extremely doubtful. (In case this argument may seem to spring from vulgar prejudice, I should like to add that I have the sincerest regard, and often admiration, for the expatriates concerned.) The point is that they are all comparatively able-bodied, and certainly all able-minded, men. And a

this time in this country—to which presumably they owe at least as much as anyone else bred and brought up in its traditions—we need as many of their sort as we can get. It may be, perhaps, that in their view these traditions are not really worth preserving. But let us just think what they include. Is it a fair summary to say they include the right to believe, behave, work, and play more or less as you please? I think it is. Even if, in the expatriates' opinion, such a degree of freedom as we possess is too powerful and too heavy a responsibility to be concentrated in the hands of a small but determined nation, it is still what the majority of that nation, which is their own, passionately seek and, having found, hold on to with all the force and tenacity of which they are capable.

I am not persuaded, however, that Huxley, Heard and Company are really so reactionary as this belief would make them out to be. However deep their mistrust, disapproval or despair of certain phases in our national character, and particularly in our recent history, they can hardly fail to realize the validity of our convictions in the present struggle. Realizing and approving these, as I believe they must, seems to me a good enough reason why they should want to be over here with the rest of us, unless they happen to be indispensably engaged elsewhere on our behalf. There are other reasons, too. Except for a handful of specialists, there is at this time no one in England who counts simply as an individual; and it is probably safe to say that most of our expatriates would be among the also-rans. But they could at least find work in this country, probably harassing, tedious, exhausting, inconvenient and inconclusive work, which would release men and women, perhaps more suited than themselves, for important and possibly vital jobs of other kinds. This, of course, is putting their potential usefulness at its lowest. There must be many spheres in which men of their intellectual vigour and ability would be of great value. That is why we can do with more of Mr. MacNeice's sort, and we can do with them now. In six months' time it will be too late—too late, that is, for any of them, except those who are disabled, to retain their self-respect, without which they can be of no account as writers. However great the intellectual courage needed to take the easy way out of this war, it is no compensation for the inevitable loss of dignity which must be the result.

NICOLAS BENTLEY

DEAR SIR,

I have just read 'Private's' very good account of a conscript's life printed in your March number, and feel impelled to write to you because, although the prompting of my own experience makes me agree with his general description, I cannot understand, far less subscribe to, much of his attitude. For obvious reasons my identity cannot be disclosed, but you must believe that eight months ago I was myself a conscript, and that I had three months in the ranks and four at an Octu before gaining my 'first pip'.

My complaints are three. (1) The writer seems to forget that nowadays there are in the Army many officers with 'left wing' opinions, who are far from being the common enemy of all rankers. It touches me on the raw to think that I myself should be regarded in this way.

(2) Who are 'we'?—the conscripts as a whole, presumably. But my experience, and the experience of all my friends who have had and are having experience of the ranks, shows that the ordinary conscript is far from having the writer's 'I-only-do-this—because-I've-got-to' attitude. True they are often dissatisfied with Army life, and will grumble and swear at the petty injustices which are so common. But if you ask their opinion, they will tell you that, although they dislike the Army (in point of fact, my experience is that the majority like it), they are content to put up with it for the present as this is the only way 'the war can be won'. Whether they are right or not is immaterial.

(3) Unless 'Private' is a utilitarian pacifist who failed to secure exemption (if so, he should have told us this), his attitude of indifference is quite inconsistent with his entry into the Army without protest. If he did protest, he should have told us so. It is futile for him to say that he 'accepts the military position', that he doesn't mind being the tool of the men responsible for the war, and that he is content until 'they' stop having a war. Such an attitude is only explicable if the writer is completely indifferent to the result of the war—if, in other words, he is quite content to allow Hitler to assume power in Great Britain and stamp out finally all vestiges of the Socialism which he so obviously, and rightly, prefers. Any man voluntarily entering the Army with these opinions must have lost all self-respect.

A JUNIOR SUBALTERN

W. H. AUDEN

POEM

The journals give the quantities of wrong,
Where the impatient massacre took place,
How many and what sort it caused to die;
But O what finite integers express
The realm of malice where these facts belong?
How can the mind make sense, bombarded by
A stream of incompatible mishaps,
The bloom and buzz of a confessed collapse?

What properties define our person since
This massive vagueness moved in on our lives,
What laws require our substance to exist?
Our strands of private order are dissolved
And lost our routes of self-inheritance,
Position and Relation are dismissed,
And epoch's Providence is quite worn out,
The lion of Nothing chases us about.

'Beware, beware, The Great Boyg has you down,'
Some deeper conscience in revulsion cries,
'The Void desires to have you for its creature,
A doll through whom It may ventriloquise
Its vast resentment as your very own,
Because Negation has no form nor feature
And all its lust to power is impotent
Unless the Actual it hates consent.'

The Universe of pure extension where
Nothing except the Universe was lonely,
For Promise was occluded in Its womb
Where the immortal families had only
To fall to pieces and accept repair,
Their nursery, their commonplace, their tomb,
All acts accessory to their position,
Died when the first plant made its apparition.

Through a long adolescence, then, the One
Slept in the sadness of Its disconnected

Aggressive creatures, as a latent wish
The local genius of the rose protected,
Or an unconscious irony within
The independent structure of the fish;
But flesh grew weaker, stronger grew the Word,
Until on earth the Great Exchange occurred.

Now to maturity must crawl the child
In whom the old equations are reversed,
For that is Cause which was Effect before;
Now he must learn for what he has been nursed,
That through his self-annulment the real world
Of self-regarding instants may endure
Its final metamorphosis and pass
Into invisibility at last.

The sacred auras fade from well and wood,
The great geometries enclose our lives
In fields of normal enmity no more,
The definitions and the narratives
Are insufficient for our solitude,
Venus cannot predict our passion, nor
The Dioscuri plant their olive trees
To guide us through the ambiguities.

And winds of terror force us to confess
The settled world of past events has not
A *faiblesse* any longer for the dull
To swim in like an aqueous habitat;
We are reduced to our true nakedness:
Either we serve the Unconditional,
Or some Hitlerian monster will supply
An iron convention to do evil by.

O beggar, bigwig, mugwump, none but have
Some vision of that holy Centre where
All Time's occasions are refreshed; the lost
Are met by all the other places there;
The rival errors recognize their loves,
Fall weeping on each other's necks at last;
The rich need not confound the Persons, nor
The Substance be divided by the poor.

It is the vision that objectifies:
 Only its Roman vigour can bestow
 On earth and sea *la douceur Angevine*,
 Only its prayer can make the children grow,
 Only its trembling can externalize
 The bland Horatian life of friends and wine;
 It is the tension of its inner dread
 That moulds the beautiful patrician head.

Our way remains, our world, our day, our sin;
 We may, as always, by our consent
 Be cast away: but neither depth nor height
 Nor any other creature can prevent
 Our reasonable and lively motions in
 This modern void where only Love has weight,
 And Fate by Faith is freely understood,
 And he who works shall find our Fatherhood.

(From 'Decision', No. 2)

BRIAN READE

GIRL DOZING

By the hair she danced him
 unmercifully guessed, so fast
 that he fell, and she enclosed
 him smaller than he ever was
 for her or for his mother.

I'm a mouth to kiss your skin,
 or a scissor, she was saying,
 for your stem. I am.
 I wish I were your shadow too
 but I would cool you then.

Oh dear. A name to call him
 nearer than the smallest name.
 There wasn't one. Dear me.
 Your balcony I could be
 she said, or summer house, or let me
 be the room you sleep in.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—II

TENBY, which is now a town of lodging-houses, used in my boyhood to consider itself not merely genteel but quite aristocratic with its numerous retired army officers, on half-pay. The pupils of the first school I went to were divided into two classes, 'gentlemen' and 'cads', the latter being of course tradesmen's sons. It was kept by a Mr. Goward, an ardent Gladstonian and Congregationalist, complete in frock-coat and semi-clerical neck-wear; I used to caricature him with considerable success though at some risk. He wielded a heavy ruler. . . . It was here I had my first serious stand-up fight. I won it, but instead of enjoying my victory and the congratulations of my friends I spoilt the whole effect by bursting into uncontrollable sobs—one would have thought I was the loser. Drawing was not neglected at this school. We were given lithographs of Swiss scenery to copy in three chalks on toned paper. After the drawing mistress had added a few masterly jabs of her own and a touch here and there of Chinese white, the copy was complete and ready for the framer. Among the people at Tenby with whom I foregathered, one family of the name of Hannay were all so tall and fair and beautiful, one was at once reminded of Pope Gregory's pun. Then there were the Swinburnes, related to the poet, and accordingly both beautiful and naughty; the Masseys, who simply pullulated, and the Prusts, one of whom I hero-worshipped for long. The Prusts occupied, with their parrot, a fine house on the south cliff, now an excellent hotel. Young Robert Prust was keen on red Indians and I thought drew them perfectly and I was his devoted disciple till I 'found him out'. This happened when, having set fire to a wood, and in full flight from the shapes of things to come, clad as we had reason to fear, in blue, Robert betrayed a most un-Indian lack of stoicism. . . . I took my Indian life very seriously indeed, and when our hunting-ground, the Burrows, was converted into golf links and invaded by a

swarm of pale-faces (in reality redder in the face than any Indian) great was my distress. Still we could go further afield and at Lydstep and other places would pass long summer days in and out of the sea.

My reading now was limited to books dealing with the red Indians and my favourite author, Gustave Aimard, whose entire works I devoured, was, as I became myself by self-election, an adopted son of the Antelope Comanche nation. I sometimes even speculated on the possibility of my having Indian blood in my veins, but it seemed but a faint hope as I regarded my Father's features. I was taught to swim early, by the simple process of being thrown from a rock into the sea. Always rescued in time, however, I soon became a pretty good swimmer, though not nearly so good as my brother Thornton, who, poor fellow, was much more at home in the water than on dry land, having injured his foot while on the war-path.

Meanwhile with the onset of adolescence, my world became invaded by new and disturbing forces. Whether upon the beach, in the streets of the town, by wood or field or mere, it seemed my fate to encounter at every turn the mocking glance of some fair girl, behold in wonderment her flashing limbs, her flowing hair and catch perchance some breath of fern-like fragrance as she passed. So far I had been drawn towards the full-bosomed majesty of maturer women, admiring from afar, and usually while in Church, their rich proportions which seemed to promise so much of warmth and consolation. But now my homage was deflected, though with less assurance, to girls of my own age. By no means precocious, when at last I was informed of the inner mysteries of reproduction, I reacted with horror and consternation! I had never envisaged anything so—realistic. . . . The female nature, so often, as I was to discover, more generous and more intrepid than its opposite, by the menace of an unaccustomed magic, incited me to a resistance dictated in the first place by the normal timidity of a youth—and prescribed, in the second, by a fastidious romanticism, which, largely nourished on the languid reveries of Burne-Jones and Rossetti, had taken possession of my soul and set up stylistic boundaries to the pathway of my imagination, thus narrowing the latter though not curtailing it, by a network of obstructions placed between me and tangible things. Uncharted beauty, always intimidating, though 'Fair as the morning'

becomes, when warmed at the fire of love, indeed 'Terrible as an Army of Banners', and I had felt less of an ass if when wandering alone on the marshes, as was my habit, I had come upon some faery's child lingering disconsolately amidst the sedge; for she, like me, would have been silent, nor would have laughed at me, but perhaps with a sad familiar smile have beckoned me to the cold ritual of her embrace. In spite of this hazy eroticism through which I was blundering, I was no weakling, being unusually strong, swift of foot and a skilful and daring climber. At football I always played centre-forward and the game appealed to me, but cricket left me cold. I could never bowl, and was only beginning to bat when I left school. The long drudgery of fielding depressed me; there were other things, so much more interesting, I might be doing. . . . I saw the celebrated W. G. Grace play once and was duly impressed, chiefly by his beard, although it was whispered that he was not quite—well you know. . . . I can't say I have pleasing recollections of my school days at Clifton. The only boy I cared for was a half-wit, but he was so sweet-natured, so honest, so trusting and faithful I loved him as I would a dog, and treated him like one. An occasional holiday permitted me to explore the purlieus of Bristol, a notable objective being a certain obscure centre of sport where for a few pence it was possible to watch a number of rats being polished off by a dog or ferret.

The rocky coast of Pembrokeshire lent itself admirably to my climbing propensities, and I have descended the perpendicular cliffs between Giltar and Lydstep at several points to beaches untrodden, I am sure, by human foot before mine. That gives a thrill, especially when you are not quite sure of getting back again. I loved the harbour at Tenby and its fleet of fishing smacks and luggers. But now, alas, the fleet has gone and only a few banal motor-launches are drawn up on the odorous shore. Above the harbour rises the façade of some good tall plain houses, and beyond again the Castle Hill is seen capped with its remnant of a fortress and adorned with an absurd statue of the Prince Consort in white marble; sculptor unknown. This view, seen from above, should make a good picture, and I intend to try my hand at it one day. Under the old town walls the annual fair was held and the cheap-jacks rattled their crockery with a recklessness which the assembled housewives found irresistible. With them I gazed spell-bound at

the antics of these masterful and ribald fellows. The blaring cacophony of the roundabouts lasted late into the night, much to the annoyance of those residents whose social status precluded them from joining in the Saturnalia. Rows of 'bathing-machines' on the beach provided, when drawn into the water, a means by which the bathers could enter with the least possible hazard to modesty. The forms of the female bathers being already protected by thick and voluminous serge garments, thus ran little if any risk of discovery. A frantic man on horseback galloped hither and thither dragging the cumbersome 'machines' in and out of the water. Under the cliff the band played and nigger-minstrels exchanged their classic witticisms until in course of time they were supplanted by a troupe of 'Pierrots' with a more refined and up-to-date technique. I and my companions, however, neglecting the fashionable throng, went further to 'The Point', where we could bathe from the rocks and bask naked and without shame in the sun.

There were 'characters' in those days. The gigantic form of Cadwalladyr, the last of a princely line, was to be seen up to his waist in the sea, propelling an immense shrimp-net before him. Attired in ancient oil-skins which, torn and perforated, were useless to keep out the water, this colossus would remain at his task for hours, impervious to cold, like some monstrous survival from the Jurassic Age. There was more than one witch in the town and they looked the part. During the 'Season' a band was employed to entertain the visitors who, together with residents, paraded up and down the various promenades of an evening. Much flirtation went on of course, and the numerous caves below the cliffs afforded convenient privacy for those requiring it. It was all most romantic and glamorous; but we were happier still to get away to Manorbier, the birthplace of Gerald the Welshman, and described by him with some justice as the most delectable spot in the whole of Wales. Here, released from the embarrassment of parental authority, we ran wild. We used to stay too at Begelly, at a house on the hill overlooking the Common, an infertile tract left over from the depredations of land-grabbers, and tenanted only by geese, cattle and gypsies. This too was heavenly. Here we were alone, away from *Papa* and all well-dressed people, away from the parish church and its picturesque humbug of a vicar, away from the miseries of school and the snobbery of both gentry and 'cads'.

To read poetry and in fact devour every book we could lay our hands on, to draw and paint, to explore hidden ways, gaze fearfully down disused coal-pits, to listen to the song of the lark, to chase butterflies, to eat enormously of good home-made loaves and butter which we took a hand in turning, and to build our castles in the air, such occupations as these made up our life at Begelly. A visit of T. H. Huxley to Tenby gave me my first glimpse of greatness. As he drove past in his carriage accompanied by a handsome lady he looked very grand indeed. My father, who disapproved of Huxley's views, being strictly fundamentalist himself, was snob enough to acknowledge with some deference the eminence of this distinguished man. I had the advantage of receiving the blessing of the renowned Cardinal Vaughan as, when consecrating the new Catholic church of St. Teilo, he swept by under his acolyte-borne canopy, looking like a particularly fine specimen of a late Roman Emperor. It was a great day for the priest of this church, a certain Father Bull, a dandified fellow, who minced and smirked about the town, awakening in the girls vague feelings of religious doubt, and I believe he made a good many converts. His accents, since he had the supreme felicity of entertaining the Cardinal, took on an added unction as he mouthed of 'Hooly Chorch'.

I had by now relinquished my dreams of becoming a trapper on the Red River, or of leading a revolt of the Araucanian Indians, and began to wonder seriously what to do with myself. My father had his own ideas and would preferably have launched me on a barrister's career. The Army, too, was considered for a while, and the respective merits of Sandhurst and Woolwich duly weighed. The Civil Service and with it the possibility of going to China also strongly appealed to me for a while. Anything, anywhere far enough from the stagnant little back-water of civilization in which I was born, and felt myself to be perishing, was bound to be alluring. It is true I loved Tenby and the sea and coast and country around it, but we suffered from the meanness of our lives at home and the hunger for a larger world and fresh horizons was becoming acute. Domestic ructions were breaking out more and more seriously, and my father, who was essentially a man of peace at any price, finally decided that I should study Art, as I had, in fact, by then myself resolved to do. He was of the opinion that an artist's profession was quite respectable provided it were practised with adequate

monetary success. 'Be a Michæangelo if you like,' he remarked, 'but first make your living'. Fully alive to the claims of culture when officially sponsored, he was an unfailing annual visitor to the Royal Academy, and made the journey to London every year apparently for that purpose alone. Though not learned in the Arts or claiming to be in any sense a connoisseur, he read his daily paper assiduously and noted with appreciation the reports of successes in the artistic world. When a local young lady once achieved the distinction of being 'hung' at the R.A. my father's civic pride swelled noticeably and her example was commended to me as one I might well strive to emulate someday. Landscape especially appealed to him as a pleasant, gentlemanly and innocent branch of Art, in contradistinction to the somewhat sinister implications of figure painting with its accompaniment of passion and even downright impropriety as unhappily exemplified in so many of the masters. Not that he was himself entirely inaccessible to the lure of fleshly beauty; the choice of his bedroom pictures alone bore witness to this, but he knew how to restrict his emotions, in every sense, to the Academic field, holding that direct contact with life in the raw were best eschewed. 'Safety First' was his motto and Respectability, short of Heaven itself, his highest aim. These principles, tenaciously pursued, though he might and did carry them to their conclusion, entailed inevitably many sacrifices. While enjoying the general respect of his fellows, he could boast of but few friends, for few indeed could approach the exacting standards of deportment which his system demanded. The most squeamish of men, his finer sensibilities recoiled in disgust before the rude pleasantries of the more easy-going. All forms of eccentricity were abhorrent to him, and as for the poor and lowly, he found in them mainly an occasion for forking out a shilling, and so an occasion to be avoided. In short, he could never be described as a good mixer. Still, his careful attention to detail, his invariable caution and exact observance of the conventions, his strict economy supplemented by wary and always judicious investment, and lastly the piety which allowed nothing to interrupt the regularity of his attendance at church and took him to Gumfreston every Sunday morning to accompany the service at the organ were not unrequited, for upon his death at the age of ninety-one he was discovered, to everyone's surprise, to have amassed a substantial fortune.

This practice I have mentioned of walking the four miles to Gumfreston and back each Sunday morning, with punctual attendance at St. Mary's Church for evensong, which he kept up so regularly and almost to his dying day, testified not only to my father's steadfast and now definitely fixed religious convictions, but to the sound self-discipline which was the key-note of his life and character. The health which he usually enjoyed was doubtless one of its by-products.

By no means averse to the claims of charity when organized in the hands of a properly constituted body, he was ever impatient of the shiftlessness, imprudence and even moral obliquity which too often characterizes the unfortunate. His respect for the 'Powers that be' would have earned the approval of St. Paul himself, and only wavered occasionally during periods of political ascendancy under a Liberal Government.

He countenanced sport when it took the form of cricket, but denounced boxing as low and brutal. In literature his preferences were for devotional works or to his earlier memories of Tennyson, in so far as he could quote them, but more usually were directed to general reading of a lighter and happier sort. Music certainly played an important part in his life, for besides, as I have said, solacing himself at organ and piano, he had even composed a few hymn tunes himself. I and other children spent many a pleasant hour with him, and some bad ones, for he loved children, provided of course they were legitimate and well-behaved. For the rest his habit of collecting shells while taking his daily exercise upon the shore, and, in their season, gathering primroses in the woods and hedges and the wild roses of the burrows, revealed his mild and gentle disposition.

It is odd that it was my brother Thornton, not me, who first found his way to America; he who had shown distinct signs of a missionary's vocation, for which his deeply religious nature and complete ignorance of anthropology seemed to qualify him, pushed his way out to the Western Continent and became, in turn, the partner or competitor of cow-boys, miners and prospectors, horse dealers, trappers, Indians, and all such wild and woolly fellows, among whom he earned the honourable title of 'the rider from away back'. Moreover, he has kept his curious naive, mystical and almost saintly nature, together with his correct English speech, unimpaired to this day.

I used to practise a low trick on Thornton. By exasperating him to the final limits of even his endurance I could count upon the moment when, burning for revenge, he would advance upon me with clenched fists and eyes grim with determination. I would then perform certain acts of buffoonery which I knew would reduce him to helpless laughter and complete powerlessness. This manœuvre nearly always succeeded, but it was playing with fire. . . .

My sister Winifred, too, took herself and her violin to the Far West, and still, under the pitiless blue of a Californian sky, suffers frequently from that *hiraeth*, or morbid nostalgia, which afflicts Welsh people. Only once a visit to Vancouver brought her temporary alleviation, 'for the weather was perfect: it rained every day'.

Another relative for whom I had a great affection was my Uncle Alfred. One day he paid Gwen and me a visit in London. It was a warm, summer day, but he refused to remove his mackintosh, but an accidental movement betrayed the fact that he wore nothing underneath. . . . Though he had studied art and music in Paris, he remained totally incompetent to cope with the realities of life, being completely honourable and guileless. In fact, he realized in himself my idea of a gentleman. His only success took place at his death, for the Clergy of St. David's Cathedral gave him a very fine funeral, gratis. He had anticipated canonization by joining innocence to poverty and then adding St. to his name. His chief fault, a propensity for playing the flute in bed, might well be excused in consideration of the exiguous state of his wardrobe.

A visit or two to London long before my student days introduced me to the wonders of the great city and I found them rather bewildering. The streets were in those days paved, if not with gold, at least with *cake*, for that at any rate is what the wood-blocks looked like to me, and a pervading smell of chipped potatoes, horse-dung and old leather reminded me not unpleasantly of the atmosphere of a restaurant at its most crowded hour.

I was now developing a strong libertarian outlook, along with its concomitant, a violent anti-Marxist bias. Visiting the meetings which took place rather furtively, from time to time in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road, provided excellent

opportunities for sketching and for listening to the doctrines of Bakounin, Elisée Reclus, Proudhon, Fourier, etc. Among the leading Anarchists of the time, Peter Kropotkin was the doyen and the most distinguished by character and erudition. His tall, bearded presence seemed to emanate courage and an unconquerable faith in the basic goodness of human nature, together with a contempt for the State and all its works. I once heard Louise Michel, 'the Red Virgin' of the Commune, hold forth; a little old woman in black, she made a dramatic effect as she stretched out a lean and accusatory claw in denunciation of our mammon-ridden society.

The English and American 'Anarchists' I found, on the whole, too sentimental and even goody-goody for my taste. A little man called Nichols who crept about Soho with his journal, 'Freedom' in his satchel, having fallen upon more than usually evil days, the Comrades got up a party for his benefit somewhere in the East End. Nichols got up and rashly volunteered a recitation from Swinburne, but his over-strained delivery and cockney accent together proved inappropriate to such an undertaking. Nichols in the end was discovered starved to death in some cellar, the final issue of 'Freedom' at his side.

With two fellow students, Ambrose McEvoy and Benjamin Evans, I used to frequent music halls as well as such assemblies as the foregoing. A shilling would admit us then even to the pit of the Empire, where the exquisite Adelina Genée danced nightly in ballet (but her I preferred to watch alone). The Alhambra, the Old Mogul, the Metropolitan, the Bedford, Collins', Old Sadler's Wells: at such haunts as these we might have been seen on many a night (generally in the Gallery).

Sometimes starting out in the small hours of the morning we would walk to Hampton Court, or Dulwich, to see the picture galleries after breakfast at some carman's pull-up. McEvoy was distinguished, apart from his own merits and charming personality, by knowing James McNeill Whistler, who was an old friend of his father's. One day, when drawing in the Life room at the Slade, the door opened on the balcony above, and Professor Brown appeared with a spruce little man in black at his side who looked down at the class with an air of genial amusement. Mr. Whistler! One had heard so much, read so much about and by this formidable butterfly with a sting, and spent so many hours in

the Print Room of the B.M. studying his etchings (I think I still prefer the Thames set to the more sophisticated Venetian) and from time to time had come upon in the Galleries some shadowy and infinitely reticent stain from his brush. It might be some princess (*soi-disant*) fainting of her own elegance, or some dim river of the dusk, but 'washed with silver', or maybe the image of a tired old gentleman sitting by the wall, or a young one obtruding hardly more than his cuffs and a violin, or a *jeune fille* poised in an immobility that seemed more than life and breathing in a kind of trance such air as would belong to a deathless world; to see before one, at last, or rather, and, as it should be, to see *above* one the famed author of these precious things, caused a thrill to stir even the most brutish of the students and an irrepressible though timid demonstration of applause, or rather of respectful recognition, arose as the Master, after bowing politely, became again invisible. Before long I was to meet him in person.

Paris: The Louvre; the Salle Carrée: A neat, small, erect old gentleman in black stands in the centre. His crisp, curly hair contains a white lock; monocle in eye he surveys the crowded walls. Cursing my neglected attire I rise and, after some hesitation (but sometimes I am brave), present myself as the brother of Gwen John now working in Paris under him, for it is, as you have guessed, Mr. Whistler I am approaching. Ceremony, compliments—for Gwen. I ask if she shows talent. Certainly. 'A sense of character?' I venture. 'Character, character? What's that? Character's of no importance. A sense of *Tone* now, that's what she shows.' He moves round the *Salle*: remarks on the pictures. 'There's Titian now, carried off by the plague at 90, or he'd be painting now. Age makes no difference except that you know more.' We pause before *L'homme au Gant*. 'Look at that! as beautiful and smooth as a sheet of polished bronze!' He has a word for nearly every one—Rembrandt, Leonardo, Veronese, Raphael, Velasquez; and *this* was the man said to be so egotistic, so arrogant as to decry all merit but his own! He leaves me with an invitation to come to see him at his studio. He leaves me enslaved.

With Gwen I meet Carmen, the handsome Italian, Whistler's model and *consolatrice*, and later we visit him as agreed. He is at work on an immense self-portrait. The subject is hardly discernible though he has worked long on it. Presently a ghostly

face emerges from the gloom on an invisible body which must be six or seven feet high. It reminds me of Balzac's *chef d'œuvre Inconnu*, though that had a foot and no face. The master is lost in over-subtlety and paints into the dark.

(To be continued)

K. J. RAINE

THE HYACINTH

Time opens in a flower of bells
the mystery of its hidden bed,
the altar of the ageless cells
whose generations never have been dead.

So flower angels from the holy head,
so on the wand of darkness bright worlds hang,
love laid the elements at the vital root,
unhindered out of love these flowers sprang.

The breath of life shapes distance into leaves,
each new born cell
drinks from the star-filled well,
the milky streams of the sky's peace.

The hyacinth springs on a dark star,
I see eternity gives place to love—
it is the world unfolding into flower,
the rose of life, the lily, and the dove.

A. J. A. SYMONS

WILDE AT OXFORD

LATE in 1896 convict C. 33, looking back at his broken career from the loneliness of his cell in Reading Gaol, wrote down with the stubby pen granted to him so that by its use he might preserve his reason, the hope that some day he would be able to say, simply and without affectation, that the two great turning points of his life were when his father sent him to Oxford, and when society sent him to prison. He failed: prison proved a turning point only to the grave; but the failure of his hope does not disturb the truth of his recognition. What he was by nature he perforce remained to the end; what he might have become in other circumstances can only be conjectured; but the particular form that his life took is a chain which we can trace back, link by link, to the days at Magdalen College which changed and sealed his fate.

Twenty-two years before he wrote his prison apologia, Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde arrived at Oxford to enter upon the demyship he had won a few months before. But already he impressed observers, both by his character and his capacities, for though Oxford diverted, it did not create him. Already he was remarked as an exceptional young man, from whom much was expected. And certainly he looked exceptional. Photographs taken a little later show a strange, unusual face, large and oval, with a fine forehead, a straight handsome nose qualified by lips of exaggerated fullness, and heavy-lidded eyes which slanted downwards from the nose. But the photographs do not show the colourless complexion which set off the slanted, lustrous, greenish-yellow eyes, nor the curious hairlessness of his cheeks, which gave him, despite his six feet and broad shoulders, an almost girlish look—the look of one of those girls who would have been handsome had they been boys, an impression deepened by his long brown locks parted in the middle. Nor do they show the pleasant confidence of his bearing, nor the expression of good humour which so quickly won friends for him—though they do show the clothes he then preferred. Bold checks were fashionable wear at that time, but the newcomer chose extreme patterns which made his bulky figure instantly noticeable. And more noticeable still,

this queer looking young man brought the gift of speech to Oxford.

It was not in looks alone that Oscar Wilde was exceptional. In almost every way he was out of the ordinary as an undergraduate. He was more than a year over the usual fresher's age; he was already a university prizewinner, for he had spent three industrious years at Trinity College, Dublin: he was Irish, with Portora instead of the usual schools behind him; he bore a long string of Celtic names to testify to the Nationalist spirit in which he had been nurtured; and above all, he came possessed of a theory by which he hoped to conquer the Victorian world. That he so nearly succeeded was largely due to a brilliant and versatile man, whose part in the formation of his character deserves more recognition than it has yet received.

John Pentland Mahaffy, called the Admirable Crichton off Trinity College by his friends, and the General Servant of Trinity College by his enemies, was an unprecedented compound of qualities usually incompatible. Many scholars have been sportsmen, as Mahaffy was; many sceptics have held Holy Orders, as Mahaffy did; but probably no other first-rate cricketer has been also an authority on incunables, no other master of fly-fishing and expert archæologist, and certainly no one else has added to those four capacities the further achievements of being a crack shot, a fine musician, and a pioneer in the deciphering of Greek papyri. Yet this list does not exhaust his interests; for perhaps above all his hobbies he prized what he called the art of conversation, which he had studied with patient energy. He had analysed its laws and branches, and was full of ideas concerning the technique of rhetorical questions and tactful pauses, the best methods to be adopted in large parties and in small, in mixed company, or in the presence of the great. It was an 'art' for which Dublin in the seventies provided an ample field of exercise, for the eighteenth-century still survived in the Irish capital, and not only because the noble houses of Merrion Square and its neighbourhood were occupied by men who could afford an eighteenth-century lavishness of hospitality. Socially Dublin was far more compact, and yet more inclusive, than London then; it was dominated, not by an aristocracy rich enough to hold itself out of contact with the middle class, nor an aloof legendary Queen, but by the Vice-regal court and its garrison of younger sons, who fraternized

more or less on terms of equality with the Protestant ascendancy of law, medicine, church and university. Large dinner parties were a daily occurrence; they formed a stage on which any man of character might make his mark. Prominent among the actors were such figures as the witty Father Healy, Lecky the historian, Mahaffy and his colleague Tyrrell, Stokes the surgeon and Sir William and Lady Wilde.

Mahaffy was accepted, even by those who did not like him, as one of the most remarkable individuals in Dublin; and the Wildes were considered, even by those who did like them, as beyond question the most eccentric. Sir William was a distinguished oculist who had been knighted for his services to science and archæology; Lady Wilde was a practised hostess who in her earlier years had been a notable Nationalist and poet of revolt. But in addition Sir William had been the pivot of a notorious lawsuit, the basis of which was the charge that he had seduced a patient with the help of drugs; while his wife was said to be indifferent to his conduct, and an inveterate *poseuse* who talked above her mind and to hide her heavy paint sat with drawn curtains in the daylight. Once, at a dinner party in the Wilde mansion in Merrion Square, the Viceroy's wife refused to take soup because her host had put his thumb in the tureen. And to the Dublin conundrum, 'Why are Sir William Wilde's nails black?' the popular answer was, 'Because he has scratched himself.' He was reputed to be the untidiest and shabbiest man in Ireland, yet one of the most resourceful and courageous surgeons in Europe. And Lady Wilde also had her legend, though it did far less than justice to her real powers of mind. Before her marriage she had startled a law court by avowing herself publicly to be 'Speranza', author of a fiery article charged against Charles Duffy at his trial for sedition. Later, though remaining a Republican after her husband's knighthood, she exercised her powerful intelligence in literary rather than political matters. Undoubtedly she was an important, effective force in the mental stimulation of her two sons. She treated books and ideas as things of importance, and encouraged them to accept authorship as an end in itself, not a means to fortune. Though in some ways a figure of fun, she may fairly be called one of the outstanding women of her time. Had her old age been less financially straitened, and less adipose, she would have earned

far more attention from the younger generation which, later, laughed at her.

When young Oscar, the romantic seventeen-year-old son of this eccentric couple, matriculated at Trinity College, Dublin, after leaving Portora School in Enniskillen, he attracted the notice of his father's friend, the witty and widely read Mahaffy. Enthusiasts are usually glad to gain disciples, and the rising, ambitious Professor of Ancient History was no exception. He called conversation an art; but he valued it far more highly than he valued any other art, for he believed that power of speech was a more powerful means than any other for the amusement and mastering of Society. And, further, he believed that Society was worth mastering. Had Mahaffy esteemed wordly success less highly, his own career, and his pupil's, might have been very different. But not being an artist, he could not derive the independent satisfaction that an artist draws from his own nature and his work. Instead, he remained, like Jowett, a man of the world, to whom conversation was a weapon. 'Many men and many women owe the whole of a great success in life to this and nothing else,' he wrote later. Meanwhile he impressed this truth, and much more, upon the mind of Sir William's impressionable son.

Much more. Mahaffy's zest for Greek was as great as his passion for conversation. This externally strict Protestant was fascinated like Gladstone, by the voluptuous, perverse founders of Western civilization; he was fascinated by Athenian culture, by the far-ranging Hellenic intellect, and the luminous fragments of Greek literature. His enthusiasm went beyond the usual bounds of scholarship; he made a closer study of the texture of Grecian life than did any of his contemporaries, and though he referred disapprovingly to the 'immoral and worthless theology' of his heroes, he did not allow it to impede his admiration, which was shared in almost equal degree by his young friend. Oscar had astonished his schoolfellows by his feeling and facility for Greek; he astonished Mahaffy by his talent for talk and quick-moving mind. He learned what he needed to learn almost on the instant. His memory was exceptional, his desire for knowledge was insatiable. Mahaffy's example stimulated him to emulative industry, and the tutor had the satisfaction of seeing his pupil pass his first examinations with high marks and credit, then win a classical scholarship, then the Berkeley Gold Medal for Greek, and finally

a demyship at Magdalen. Talented and confident, Oscar came to England determined to conquer it, and his public career began when he matriculated. He had turned twenty the day before.

Oxford in the seventies would have impressed a far duller and less responsive subject than this tall young Irishman, with his head full of Greek, and Mahaffy's injunctions in his memory. Not yet enlarged by manufactures, free from its modern excrescence of suburban ugliness, Oxford ranked high among the cities of Europe as an unspoiled survival of the historic past. Shops were few and picturesque; new buildings negligible, old ones beautiful; the streets were still made with cobbles. It was a harmony of old churches and quadrangles, of gargoyles and entrances, with open country just beyond its bridges—country only to be reached on foot for those who could not afford to ride horseback, for even boneshaker bicycles, hansom or four-wheelers were rare, and tramcars did not appear until the next decade. The mediæval loveliness of Oxford was both a complement and contrast to the formal eighteenth-century elegance of Merrion Square in which Oscar Wilde had passed his youth.

Comfortable in his college rooms, Oscar Wilde entered upon the business of undergraduate life; he returned calls and made acquaintances, attended and cut lectures, bought dozens of books, rode about the countryside, attended long breakfasts, talked to all who would listen, listened to all who talked well, fished, rambled, shot partridges. He indulged to the full the normal physical exuberance of youth; on one occasion his friend J. E. C. Bodley, returning unexpectedly, found Oscar and another Irishman, Barton, boxing in his rooms; on another Oscar climbed perilously from box to box at a local music-hall to summon friends to an improvised party in honour of his elder brother, over from Dublin on holiday. His fellows found him simple, happy, generous and exuberant, full of smiles and phrases, a stimulating companion and a welcome guest.

Intellectually, no less than in its beauty, Oxford in the seventies deserves remembrance. Despite Swinburne's dislike of his university, it was the Mecca of Pre-Raphaelitism, represented in the Union by the unfaded frescoes of Burne-Jones, Rossetti and Morris. And though the 'Oxford Movement' had spent its original force, Newman's *Apologia* and controversy with Kingsley were constantly discussed. Indeed, perhaps not since

those middle ages with which the city was still visibly linked had so many remarkable teachers been joined by the accident of proximity: Mark Pattison, Sir Henry Maine, Benjamin Jowett and Max Müller among them: Matthew Arnold had recently been Professor of Poetry; Walter Pater was in residence at Brasenose. And, more inspiring than any of these, there was also John Ruskin.

Ruskin's name sounds a very different note in our ears to-day from that which it gave out in the seventies. We are wise after the event; we know the story of his Whistlerian gaffe, of the grandiose futility of his Guild of St. George, of his impotent unhappiness, and the limitations of that exact observation which he so highly prized. But in the early seventies his reputation was at its greatest height. Twenty years before he had been derided for his Gothic preferences and dogmatic expositions of the religious value of art. Gradually, however, he wore opposition down to win a continental audience. At last, despite his Socialism, he was accepted even in England; and in 1870 returned to Oxford as Slade Professor of Art.

It was a new thing for Oxford to find a European celebrity as one of its professors. A Ruskin lecture was an extraordinary experience. Ford Madox Brown described him as appearing like a cross between a fiend and a tallow-chandler, redeemed by his Homeric eloquence as a speaker. But he seemed more than eloquent to many; he seemed inspired; he almost seemed to possess a working draft of the millennium. Within a year of assuming his professorship, tall, thin, big-nosed Ruskin, with his blue eyes, blue frock-coat, and bright-blue stock, had become an Oxford legend. On one occasion he was seen staggering across Magdalen Bridge in a manner suggesting drunkenness, but closer inspection showed that he was merely walking with his eyes shut; later he explained that, having seen a sunset of exceptional beauty, he had endeavoured, by walking with closed eyes, to retain the impression until he could reach his rooms to note it down. On another occasion, when suffering from a dangerous chill caught while painting before breakfast, he inquired from the anxious doctor what would be the *worst* thing for him, and promptly took it. Frequently his braided gown would slip from his shoulders and trail in the puddles of the street as he walked along rapt in thought. He was still a rich man, though, having become convinced of the wrongness of usury, the whole of his large

income had been handed to another's use. Even his capital was at the mercy of his generosity, and ultimately disappeared. Such unusual conduct heightened the effect of that mixture of rhetoric and colloquialism with which he fascinated his listeners.

Three weeks after Oscar Wilde matriculated at Magdalen in October, 1874, Ruskin, newly returned from abroad, began a course on *The Æsthetic and Mathematical Schools of Florence*, and the two men met. The strange, strained prophet had found a new disciple. Oscar Wilde fell beneath his spell. It was natural that he should. Ruskin was a teacher who, over and above his powers of oratory, had exemplified his teachings in his life; a rich man who had set the truths of art above riches; a great writer, the friend and patron of many artists, who had financed the remote, mysterious Dante Gabriel Rossetti; he was the early champion of the Pre-Raphaelites, and had in a dozen ways opposed the self-satisfied materialism of Victorian England. Oscar Wilde was young, idealistic, ambitious, absorbed in dreams of the Greek life he had studied with Mahaffy, as passionately interested in things of the mind as most schoolboys are in athletics and cricket records. His temperament predisposed him to admire Ruskin; he would have admired him even at a distance, but a fortunate chance brought the pupil into closer personal contact with the master.

It was one of Ruskin's views that all labour is noble; and another that, if a thing obviously needs doing, then the perception of the necessity is enough warrant for doing that particular thing. In accordance with these principles, and regarding certain London streets as dirtier than they need be, he had, two years earlier, taken upon himself to clean them, and surprisingly appeared between the British Museum and St. Giles's Circus, broom in hand. Subsequently he maintained, at his own expense, a staff of three at work for eight hours daily.

Six months before Oscar Wilde came to Oxford, the strange professor had embarked upon a new experiment in labour. He explored the absorption of undergraduates in 'merely athletic exercise', and in order to divert them to a useful alternative, asked his students to help in remaking a country road along the foot of the hills past Ferry Hinksey. A number of his ardent followers volunteered at once; and observers were entertained by the sight of young men in flannels setting off with picks and shovels to break ground for the new road. When Ruskin returned to Oxford

in the autumn, the spade work was over, and the volunteers turned to stone-breaking. And now a new face was seen among the diggers. Side by side with Leonard Montefiore of Balliol, the rich, brilliant Jew who died untimely, with Alfred (later Lord) Milner, with Arthur Toynbee (whose Toynbee Hall still continues its honourable work), with W. H. Mallock (reputed the most brilliant undergraduate of his day), W. G. Collingwood and others whose names are not recorded, Mahaffy's pupil broke stones—less, probably, from any zeal for labour than from a desire to know Ruskin and participate in the breakfast parties held in his grandly furnished rooms in Corpus. Many times he heard 'The Master' express his hope that his followers might 'band themselves together, one day, and go out in a kind of Benedictine brotherhood to cultivate waste places and make life tolerable in our great cities for the children of the poor'; and, just as he had absorbed from Mahaffy the conception of conversation as a weapon of power in the Victorian world, so now he took from Ruskin the idea of a mission to teach the value of beauty. He took other ideas also; notably that new forms in art cannot be invented but must wait for the discovery of a new physical medium. But these other ideas played no part in his interior development; whereas the conception of himself as a Ruskinian missionary became part of his plan of life, and was to have interesting consequences.

As a disciple of the æsthetic Slade professor, young Oscar took special pains in the furnishing of his rooms. Very cleverly, he chose blue and white china as the keynote. There was dexterity in the choice, for blue-and-white, now so commonplace and so grossly copied, was at that time the hobby of such eccentrics as Whistler and Rossetti, who eventually made it fashionable and too expensive for their pockets. When Oscar chose it for his Oxford rooms, the Salting and other classic collections were still being made; and to possess blue-and-white was to connect oneself even if remotely, with these experts and the Pre-Raphaelite tradition. An undergraduate specializing in blue-and-white was a novelty previously unheard of. But the æsthetic newcomer gave Oxford something more to talk about than his porcelain. He was hospitable, witty, eloquent and earnest; his light-heartedness was effervescent; he was delighted and delightful. He said striking things. The best remembered, his aspiration that he

'wished he could live up to his blue china', was widely repeated. Many laughed, but the remark was meant seriously. Oscar had been moved to emulation by the unity of Ruskin's life and Ruskin's teaching; he felt himself to be a poet, and he was eager to live as he felt, not to subdue his nature to the convenience and commerce of the world.

Ruskin's example was not alone, however, in exciting his emulation. It was a high moment for examples; a west wind of poetic fervour ruffled the treetops and warmed the imagination of the sensitive young. Prose languished, but, secure in unchallenged peace and the prosperity of a golden age, the English imagination gave itself to rhyme. Tennyson and Browning still lived to enjoy a fame established many years earlier; but a dozen newer names dazzled adolescence; Rossetti, whose poems had been exhumed from his wife's grave only four years before Oscar went to Oxford; Swinburne, whose first series of *Poems and Ballads* had delighted, amazed and shocked his readers four years earlier still; William Morris, who had not yet written *Sigurd the Volsung*; Coventry Patmore, John Addington Symonds, James Thomson, Philip Bourke Marston, Matthew Arnold and Edward Fitzgerald, whose version of Omar, though in its third edition, still lacked the author-translator's name.

Many of these poets were linked by personal friendship or sympathy as the successors of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; they offered an inspiration wholly lacking in the field of fiction. The novel of psychology was not yet created, and despite George Eliot it seemed that the place of Dickens, Lever and Thackeray was abandoned to such masters of genteel ineptitude as James Payn and William Black. There was nothing in these to move a romantic mind, and so even those prose writers to whose influence young Oscar Wilde submitted were, with one exception, writers who treated prose as though it was a form of verse; Ruskin, with his rolling periods like ocean waves; Swinburne, whose alliterative clauses cohere into sentences which cover a page and a half of type, and Walter Pater. The one exception was Matthew Arnold, who, though he too was a poet, seldom used poetic rhythms in his prose works. Instead, he employed a tone of tired, ironic urbanity in which the Oxford manner is distilled into an air of easy rightness which seems almost unanswerable. His *Essays in Criticism* were a mental tuning-fork to two, perhaps three generations; and

his vaguely defined doctrine of culture imposed itself upon many who failed to see that though Arnold wrote clearly, he did not always think clearly. It half imposed itself on Oscar Wilde; though the full influence of Arnold's thought was not revealed in his life till more than ten years later. That of Pater worked more rapidly.

In the year before Oscar Wilde matriculated at Magdalen, Walter Pater, a quiet, unnoticeable don of Brasenose College, still in his early thirties, collected together nine essays which had appeared at intervals during the preceding years, and issued them with a preface and conclusion, as his first book, under the title *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Few first books have created so profound an intellectual stir. The essays themselves deal, not with history, but with art and poetry; with such personalities as Botticelli, such stories as *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and such poetry as that of Michelangelo. Throughout these studies, however, an unexpected attitude to life and art was implied; and in the *Preface* and *Conclusion* this attitude was underlined.

Pater too, like Arnold and Ruskin, was in his way a preacher, but his doctrine (expressed, like theirs, in admirably convincing sentences) was, though he possessed a strong feeling for the ceremonies and sensations of religion, an exaltation of personal experience above all restrictions, as the end of life. 'The theory, or ideal, or system, which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of the experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract morality we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.' Dangerous words, amplified in a passage of great eloquence which has since become famous, which was suppressed from the second edition of his book and modified for the third: 'A counter number of pulses only is given us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?' Pater supplied his own answer: 'While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or words of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.' The answer is clear enough, and is hardly qualified by Pater's final words—tha

of the wisdom which consists in expanding our mortal interval, in 'getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time'; the poetic passion, 'the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's own sake', has most.

It may seem surprising, now, that this doctrine of æsthetic indulgence should have seemed new or overwhelming. But it was both; and it is largely because it was then so effectual that it is discounted to-day. In effect, it is one of the half-dozen attitudes which it is natural for the mind to take, an attitude that has its representatives in every generation; but it has seldom been stated with so much force or clarity. And for Oscar it was reinforced by the man himself. Perhaps of all the remarkable individuals then established in Oxford, this reticent, unassuming, unnoticeable bachelor, with his cavalry moustache and fleshy chin, was the strangest. In contrast to the Renaissance splendour of his sentences, his private hours were passed in a set of college rooms so small that his bedroom was little larger than a prison cell; and despite the gospel of sensation-seeking which his book taught, he cultivated regular habits of undisturbed austerity. He found satisfaction in ritual, and felt a special sympathy for the ecclesiastical life. Outwardly he conformed to the respectable code of his time and place; the silk hat, the frock-coat, the careful speech were all in accord with Oxford tradition; only in his apple-green tie did he show any outward mark of the æsthetic enthusiast, the advocate of sensuous experience, the admirer of Winckelmann and his fiery homosexual friendships. His personal life was repressed into a minor key; and though once or twice he indulged, on paper, his dreams of 'people of a remote and unaccustomed beauty, somnambulistic, frail, androgynous, the light almost shining through them', it is doubtful if he ever accepted the responsibility of physical love. But, discreet or irreproachable though his life was, there were members of Oxford society who saw through the veil that Pater set between his own nature and the world.

Jowett, the Master of Balliol, was one. Years earlier he had complimented Pater with the prediction that his mind 'would come to great eminence'; but now, confronted with the hedonistic æstheticism of *The Renaissance*, Jowett, as Regius Professor of Greek, made it very clear that he completely disapproved of the paganism of his former pupil. More public still was the criticism of W. H. Mallock, already described as a participant in Ruskin's

road-making. While still an undergraduate, Mallock published long Peacockian satire, *The New Republic*, in which, under the disguises, many principal figures of the time discuss culture, faith and philosophy in an English country house. Tyndall, Huxley, Ruskin, Arnold, Pater and Jowett all appear in this clever, still readable work; but though in other instances the caricatures are harmless, the portrait of Pater frightened its subject. He appears: Mr. Rose, a 'pale creature with a large moustache', who 'always speaks in an undertone'; his two topics are described as 'self-indulgence and art', and he claims that he looks upon life 'as a chamber which we decorate as we would decorate the chamber of the woman or the youth that we love, tinting the walls of it with symphonies of subdued colour, and filling it with works of fine form, and with flowers, and with strange scents, and with instruments of music'. In this and similar paraphrases and even plain parodies, it was made very clear to the observant reader that Mr. Rose was Pater; that the basis of his philosophy was a dreamy, disguised sensualism; and that he was interested in forbidden literature and ambiguous passions. The hit was unmistakable. The reticent don of Brasenose became more self-enclosed than ever; he confined himself to the company of tried friends; the too frank *Conclusion* was withdrawn from the second edition of *The Renaissance*; and for twelve years he did not publish another book.

But Pater was not satirised alone. In one scene 'Mr. Rose' produces a paper from his pocket and reads to the company a sonnet 'written by a boy of eighteen—a youth of extraordinary promise. I think, whose education I may myself claim to have had some share in directing'—and the poem that he reads is a faithful parody of one that Oscar Wilde had published not long before. Already the heaven was working, for in that parody, and what had gone before, we may see the explanation of Oscar's choice of Oxford as one of the two turning points in his life. He was like the young Prince of the fairy story who, when setting out in the world, receives three gifts from the King his father. From each of his three masters, Ruskin, Arnold and Pater, he took an idea which influenced his life. Oscar came to Oxford as a brilliant Irishman; he left it an Oxonian.

(To be concluded)

TOM HOPKINSON

THE THIRD SECRETARY'S STORY

WHEN I was a young man it was my custom to pursue women. I was at that time—I am talking now of thirty years ago—third secretary to the Legation in one of the Balkan capitals. There were half-a-dozen of us young men connected with the Legation, and we led an uncommonly easy and enjoyable life. The Empire we represented appeared to us in no danger of collapse. We were not required to put in long hours of work, and we certainly had not the inclination. Our most onerous duty was to prepare a speech for the Minister, passing on the compliments of our own Majesty on the local Majesty's birthday, or the anniversary of his accession. Occasionally it would be necessary to plan a route or arrange a round of entertainment for a visiting lord, or a small party of M.P.s. Very rarely some enquiry in connection with trade or business would come in, which we would pass on to someone else to deal with. The most important occasions in our lives were the two balls given every year at the Legation; our chief distractions were the countless other entertainments, for which we had no responsibility, and at which our presence was considered essential.

For our careers, we counted mainly on the influence of our friends at home. We hoped indeed that a lucky chance would allow us to perform a service for some member of a royal house—striking up the pistol, perhaps, from the hand of an assassin, or a recognition in an out-of-the-way place, where we would put our purse and command of languages at the Royalty's disposal.

We all expected to get on, but we knew that, as a last resource, we could exchange our nationality, position and excellent family connections for a wife who would make up our only deficiency—that of fortune.

Living a life of this kind, it was natural for us to spend a large part of our time, and almost all our money and energy, in intrigues and love-affairs. We had no plans or projects of the

mind to require our application. The Minister positively demanded that his staff should be socially agreeable. He detested above all things the type of man who attempted to make a career for himself in the service by hard work. 'Pushers' he called them and to put a spoke in the wheel of a pusher he would employ an initiative and energy he showed on no other occasion.

His whole immense family and personal connections would be called into play. Letters would go from aides-de-camp to duchesses; notes would pass from M.P.s to Cabinet Ministers; memoranda from well-connected subordinates would appear on the desks of departmental heads; even the Court would at times become involved. The whole fabric of Society groaned and heaved—to prevent some young man from securing the advancement he had sought too strenuously.

This suited me. I have always held that there is an activity and way of living proper to each age, and certainly the age for pursuing women is when one is young. I pursued, not quite without discrimination, but without plan and with little concentration.

I had no ideal of womanhood which I was trying to discover. I had no scheme for getting on in the world by well-exploited intrigue. I was not in search of a happy way of life. I would leave one woman with whom I was in harmony, for another with whom I had not the slightest hope of being, simply because she was another. If, in the course of a delightful love-affair, the door of a new room opened, I went through. I should have felt I was actually cheating myself had I refused.

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It was with such an outlook on the world that I went one night to a party at the house of some people I scarcely knew. They lived in a tall house in an old quarter of the town. Dancing was going on in a large room on the first floor lit by a number of chandeliers. There was an orchestra, many people I knew, and enough to eat and drink. Before I had been there more than two hours there was only one question in my mind—which of three women I should escort home.

I considered the matter with no special interest, certainly without anything that could be called excitement, and it is curious that after years in which the faces and manners of women I once loved have vanished from my mind, those of two I scarcely knew

remain distinct and detailed, from an evening which seemed likely to prove no more remarkable than another.

There was, first, a Frenchwoman, entering upon middle age, plump but extremely well-preserved. Her dress, her style of hair-dressing, her perfume, her conversation, her gestures were all so exactly what they ought to be, so trained and devised for public appearance, that I could not help feeling a malicious interest as to the way she would make love.

The second woman was a Russian, small and rather dried-up, with fuzzy hair and bright lips, whom I had seen at one of our legation parties. She came of a prehistoric family, possessed no money and no visible husband, making up for their absence by a sharp, dividing, wit, very noticeable in a society where women preferred to be the encouragement of wit in men, rather than have dealings in it themselves.

Of her husband, I remember, she remarked: 'He's given me the five third-best years of his life: what more can I expect?' And to a casual acquaintance who asked after her health, she replied 'My dear, I have no health.'

The third of the women I had never seen before. She was a tall, rather round-faced girl, with dark hair parted evenly, and a skin of extraordinary pallor and transparency. She had broad shoulders like a boy, and a slim straight body which she had not the least idea how to manage. It made all her clothes seem ridiculous.

'A charming appearance,' agreed the Frenchwoman, noticing my interest. 'But underneath—just another of those stiff English girls, one cannot call them women. They remain girls long after they have married and borne children. The height of their ambition is to play hockey with their sons and converse with them in the slang of a Public School.'

The girl, she told me, was the wife of the English doctor in the town, a man some years older than herself. They had been married for two years, and neither she nor her husband took part in social life. It was a surprise to see her here this evening.

I danced with this girl, and brought her a drink in one of the intervals. Though she was at least twenty-two or -three, I treated her as a child, with a sort of bantering deference which I imagined to be suitable.

I had been paying some attention to the Frenchwoman, and it

must have been half-an-hour or more since I had last spoken to the girl, when I noticed her get up and go towards the door.

The evening was not half over, but it was clear she was already leaving. It was painful to me to see her walk away so easily, when I had already become entangled with her in my mind. Excusing myself to my partner, I crossed the room and overtook her as she was passing through the door.

‘I shall see you to your carriage.’

‘Don’t trouble,’ she answered. ‘You have so many social duties.’ I said nothing, but remained waiting.

She was wearing a vague look as she came down the stairs. ‘I have lost my bag. It must be in the corner where we were talking.’

The corner where we had talked was not in the main room but a smaller one, and the girl, with the awkwardness that seemed natural to her, pressed after me to find it. Her bag was not on the piano, nor the mantelpiece. It was not on the sofa. The only place left was a curtained window-seat. I drew back the curtain. The Russian lady, looking brighter-lipped and more dried-up than ever, disengaged herself from an elderly Count. I secured the bag and turned away. In doing so I glanced at my companion. She had flushed, not with a young girl’s embarrassment, but with what looked like anger—as though the pair were doing something to which they had no right.

It was the smallest possible incident. It was hardly an incident at all, but it made up my mind as to how I was to spend the evening. I followed the girl down the wide stairway. At the foot stood the servant from the Legation.

‘Get my hat and coat,’ I said, ‘and take them back with you. I shall walk with this lady to her carriage.’

She had no carriage, and I knew she had no carriage. We walked slowly down the street till a cab drew up. I put her inside, asked the address, and got in beside her.

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As we drove through the streets of the town towards her house I suffered no lack of conversation. What keeps a man tongue-tied as a rule is not the inability to think of anything to say, but the fear of saying something which must on no account be said. Once he has learned, as doctors and diplomats learn, to dissociate tongue

and mind, leaving the tongue free to play easily around familiar themes, conversation can be left to make itself.

We talked of many things. In my mind there was only one consideration—how, when we got back to her house, I was to get inside. I worked the matter out with all the ingenuity I had. The main impression she gave me was of division. She was beautiful, and she made herself ungainly. She was casual and passionate, I told myself, but her manner was narrow and restrained. Even her voice was cramped. Her conversation, which should have been naive and penetrating, was formal and ridiculous. ‘My husband’, she was saying now, ‘considers that a city practice offers him the best hope of progress. In the country it takes so long to become known.’

‘But what,’ I asked, ‘made him decide to come abroad, instead of practising in an English city?’

She replied, I imagine, that he knew the language, that he had an aunt, that someone had invited him . . . I was not listening. We had reached the house. I was paying off the cab. I had resolved upon my approach. As we came up to the door, as she reached to find her key, I was to say ‘Will you answer me one question?’

Then, when she looked towards me, I was to press on. ‘Before you came to the party this evening you were resting. You had not meant to come out. What made you change your mind at the last minute? And why were you going home so soon?’

It was clear from what the Frenchwoman had said that she went out seldom. I felt sure in my mind that she had come out to-night on impulse. Her sudden going home made it clear that the evening was a disappointment. In any case I did not need an accurate analysis of her actions. What I needed was half-a-minute to find myself inside the door.

All this was in order in my mind when, as we reached the top-most step, she turned to me and said ‘Please come inside.’

The room in which I found myself was not the one I was expecting—the stuffy dining-room or pretty drawing-room of an English couple of the day. It was tall and airy, walled with books. A fire of logs was burning. In front of it was a long and deep settee. At the far side of the room were windows, reaching down to the floor, rounding into neat half-circles at the top. With curtains undrawn they carried right into the room, the lighted town, and beyond, the darkness of the river.

The girl came across and drew the curtains. In her own house she walked less awkwardly. She did not walk awkwardly at all. She walked with a suppressed resiliency and grace.

Anyone who has lived as I lived will know that there are two ways to get a woman one wants—provided, that is, she can be got at all; for no one, I suppose, imagines that all women are accessible.

The first way is gradual: the second, direct. By the gradual way one passes through all stages from friendship to the height of passion, taking such a small step at each meeting that no delicacy is upset, and there is no point at which the woman can withdraw with any show of reason. This method is like the occupation of a conquered territory, with the slow demolition of defences. It takes time, and contains few surprises. But it involves no risk, and the invader is never exposed to a repulse.

The other way demands assurance, but with many natures—particularly the strongly moral or religious—it is the only one which can succeed. This is to begin the affair the wrong way round, and make love at the first meeting. Such a course is not for every man. It depends on his behaving, in an unlikely situation, as though it were the most natural in the world, on his overcoming every fear and qualm of his own, in order that he may overcome those of another. Above all, he must be sharply aware of what he is doing, and prepared in himself to face, or to evade, the consequences.

These may well include his rejection—perhaps even his denunciation—by the woman, when her moral nature has recovered. They may also be the reverse. Feeling herself irretrievably committed, she may fling herself upon him, guilt and all, as a permanent possession.

The girl came over and sat down on the sofa. 'I asked you in to-night,' she said, 'because I have decided to take a lover. It happened that I chose you. Will you please tell me directly whether you wish to be my lover or not? If not, you must leave this house at once.'

She spoke these words in a flat voice, with a manner apparently composed. She looked like a schoolgirl repeating a lesson, or a maid who has been sent to deliver an invitation. For a moment I wondered if this were some kind of trap. I looked at her hand. She was pinching a corner of the sofa between her fingers, and her

nails were white. I looked at her foot. She was pressing her toe so hard against the floor that her shoe made a right-angle, like a silver L.

I began to speak, but could get no further. I could only look at her bent-back foot and clenching fingers. I had a hundred prepared speeches in my mind, but as I looked at her there was not one of them I could use. 'I do want to make love to you,' I began, and then, because the words seemed foolish, stopped speaking altogether. At last, as a new thought came into my mind, I used the silliest words of all, the words of the schoolboy who has lost the answer ' . . . but I don't know.'

Immediately she began to smile. Quite a new look, something charming and coquettish, came into her face. 'Don't know?' she asked. 'Surely you're being a little unreasonable. You come here for a purpose. You find it can be fulfilled. At once you hesitate and begin to make terms and conditions. Is that what they teach you in your diplomatic service?'

'I'm not making terms,' I said. 'Only I don't know where I am. I feel you must have mistaken me for someone else. Or perhaps you let me stay here so that you can score off someone. . . . I don't know what I mean, or what I'm saying.'

She moved her hand an inch towards me, as if for reassurance.

'As this will be between ourselves—it can't be to injure anybody else. And as for your being a substitute . . . but why are you not listening to me?'

'I was listening to your voice. When we were at the party it was an ordinary voice, thin and dry. On the way home in the cab it was like a voice heard down the telephone. Now it grows more alive each time you speak. . . .'

'Well? . . . You keep stopping. Is it so that I shall tell you to go on?'

I could not go on. I could not even answer. Something—an idea—was passing through my mind, and I had to follow it. It was an idea about the girl before me—an idea which, if I could only apprehend it, would make everything clear. I was obliged to follow the idea, even if for the moment it left me gaping on the sofa. She appeared to be one of a legendary kind of woman. Yes, that was it. She was one of the legendary, fortunate, ones of whom a few are born in every generation. Men, so my mind was saying, can be fortunate in many ways. A man may be

lucky in business, which means that when business is on foot his powers are at their sharpest. He may be lucky over horse-racing. The particular combination of sights and sounds and interests on a race-course tune him to his highest pitch. Some men are lucky in battles. They need the smell of danger. Until they are in the presence of death they scarcely begin to feel themselves alive. In these and a hundred other ways men can be lucky—but for a woman there is only one way to be lucky, that is in the act and presence of love. Then, at the moment when others hesitate, she, the fortunate one, glows and becomes incandescent, warming every creature near.

‘Won’t you even tell me what you are thinking?’ she had asked. Some part of my mind came back—enough to answer, but not enough to answer sensibly.

‘I was thinking that you are a lucky kind of woman,’ I said weakly. She took no advantage of my banality.

‘I hope I am lucky for you,’ she said, ‘because I have not proved very lucky for myself.’

In the course of that night I realised something which I had only partly understood before—that the act of love-making and the power which supports it is something less than half physical.

The deepest excitement of love is not something one experiences inside oneself at all. It is something one produces in another, and so experiences back from them.

What provoked love with this girl was the astonishing effect it had on her. Not only did she physically come to life—her vague look giving way to a delightful self-possession, her controlled and diffident gestures become languorous and easy—I had even the impression that new faculties and perceptions came into existence in her.

I recalled the childhood story of a girl asleep in a thicket of briars. When she was kissed, she woke up—but everything about her woke as well. So it was now. This girl had come to life, and all about took on for her a new existence. She saw and heard and felt more sharply. The fire made her warmer, and the colours on the walls were brighter. She understood more easily. She could have taken any book off the shelves and apprehended its meaning in a moment.

She was aware with absolute perception of me, and of my feelings. Most of all she was aware of herself. The various elements

which had composed her appearance at the party—the square shoulders, long slim legs, dark parted hair and straight, rather cautious, mouth, had taken on a new existence, as a woman. I could see from the way she stretched her naked body on the couch that she felt the blood flowing down her veins, experienced the jumping of her heart, willed and controlled the movement of each muscle. Most plainly of all I could see this in her eyes.

I had noticed them as we drove home. They were, even then, peculiarly bright and full. Most noticeable was their roundness. The eye was not a mere oval appearing between lids. One perceived the presence of the whole eyeball, there inside the socket, reflecting what she saw by lenses to the brain.

Over her eyelids, sole barrier between the world and knowledge, the clearness of her skin became almost a transparency. I found myself wondering whether they could keep out the light.

Now these round eyes, no longer nervous and restrained, had become an extra channel of communication. They saw, and they revealed. It was impossible to mistake their ecstasy. Simply to look at them was to be told a secret, her secret, all the secrets that she had—while they in turn entered into all they saw.

In the intervals between love-making she accepted our situation as completely natural, and treated me as if we had been partners in a campaign. She laughed at me for having pretended to the servant that she had a carriage.

‘You knew I hadn’t one. I knew you knew I hadn’t one. But of course a Third Secretary can’t go home to bed with a woman who hasn’t a carriage of her own.’

She asked me what I thought of the party, whether I had not been very taken with the Frenchwoman; what was my opinion of the Russian lady? When I remained silent, hesitating to ask why she had let me in, she read my question in my silence, and laughed at me again.

‘I just happened to take a fancy to you,’ she said. ‘Did you think it was your official position that attracted me?’

Then she ridiculed me for looking so serious about something ‘which, after all, is only love.’

As a lover she was exacting and delightful. She burned with an extravagant vitality. When a log fell from the fire, and she got up from the couch to put it back, it was as if she returned from a

six-months' absence. Once the door shook. I looked sideways up at her, startled myself, expecting to see fear.

She was supporting herself in a childish attitude, face downwards, resting on her hands, with her head raised above the back of the couch and her long dark hair falling round her shoulders. Her face showed only elation. The noise passed, and she lay down beside me.

'Now we're alone again,' she said.

Towards morning I fell asleep. When I woke I was wrapped in a blanket. She was sitting on the floor, still naked, staring into the fire.

'What do you see in the fire?' I asked.

'A long sequence of days,' she said.

As day was breaking she led me down the garden. At the bottom was a cluster of flowering bushes. The low wall had a gate in it, giving on to an overgrown deserted lane. The hinge had rusted and was hard to move. The movement of the gate turned up a fresh score in the mould, a black score on the green. She pointed to the mark and smiled: 'You see you are the first,' she said.

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I spent the day working at the Legation. I had never known myself able to concentrate so easily and successfully on my work. Small questions which had bothered me for days I disposed of in a moment. I made, it appeared, an impression on those about me. Everyone I met seemed pleased to see me. The Minister went so far as to put his hand on to my shoulder.

At about four o'clock, as I was preparing to leave, a note was delivered to me. It came from the Frenchwoman of the evening before: 'Counting on you for half-an-hour this evening before dinner. I have news for you of importance.'

To say that I saw through this note would be—after all my training—an understatement. I saw right round behind it and out the other side. I knew perfectly well that the Frenchwoman had no news for me of importance. In all probability, by the time I arrived, she would have forgotten having mentioned the word 'news' at all. If she did remember, and thought it necessary to keep up the pretence, her news would be some meaningless piece of Legation scandal—composed, very likely, while I was on the way. So-and-so had said such-and-such a spiteful thing about me.

Did I know why I had not yet received an invitation to the Centenary celebrations?

More even than that, I realised why it was that the Frenchwoman had taken the trouble to send a note to me at all—simply because on the previous evening I had left her.

If I had stayed behind and seen her home she would have been in no such hurry. Because I abandoned her she was obliged to follow me.

Though I saw through the invitation, I had already decided to accept it. In the society in which I lived it was not our custom to refuse invitations—particularly from a woman. It would have seemed to us as discreditable as, in another age, to refuse a challenge. I would call in for a short time, I told myself, and leave early.

Lastly, I must admit, there was a further consideration in my mind. To live the life we had chosen, the only life we considered amusing, it was necessary to keep free of entanglements. We had therefore no sooner started on an affair than we were thinking of its end. The ordinary lover looks for his consummation when he holds his mistress in his arms. We looked further. We looked to the time when the love-affair would be finished, the mistress disposed of, and ourselves embarking on some new adventure.

That being the case, we accepted it as a principle never to plunge in too deep. Start an affair—but so soon as it is started, begin to back away. Press forward violently for a time—then again leave matters alone, and show no interest. So you arouse in the other the greatest stir, retaining for yourself the utmost freedom. To-night would be an opportunity to establish independence. I could not, according to my way of thinking, establish it too soon.

I went to see the Frenchwoman, was obliged—as I half knew from the first I should be—to accompany her to dinner, and was not free until an hour too late for visits.

The next day I was sent away by the Minister, and it was nearly a week before I returned to the capital. During the week reflections new to me had been passing through my mind; and it was with ideas I should have found ridiculous a week before that I drove out on the evening of my return to the house where I had spent the night.

I do not know whether it was a shock, or whether it was something I had been expecting all along, but the house was shut. The

blinds were drawn. As I came down the steps I struggled with a conviction—the conviction of having committed a mistake which it might be impossible for me ever to repair.

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There began for me at that moment the most painful period of my life. At first I attempted to continue existence as before. I had rooms close to the Legation, where it was easy for my acquaintances in the Service to call in on me at any time. I had an engagement book with scarcely a blank day for months ahead. I had no interests outside my work, but those which our society afforded. I tried to welcome my friends whenever they called in. I kept the appointments I had accepted.

The attempt ended in a week. I drove away a number of my friends who were trying to make the evening pass pleasantly for me. When, at an evening party, the Frenchwoman whose invitation I had accepted came into the room, I was obliged to leave. It was not that I bore her any grudge. It was simply that if she had come near me I should have struck her.

From that moment it was clear that I must change my way of life, if I were not to allow myself to cause a scandal. I moved my lodgings to a remote part of the town. I applied myself to work in an unheard-of way. In addition, to excuse me from attendance at social events, it was necessary to take up an occupation for my spare time. I chose to study the history and archæology of the country where I was stationed. This allowed me to spend my evenings among books, and to remove myself from the capital at week-ends in order to visit libraries, to examine buildings, or to take part in excavations up and down the country.

For a few weeks my friends attempted to dissuade me. They regretted losing a companion. They objected to my adopting a way of life which might be taken as a criticism of their own. When I pointed out, however, that this new life was likely to be as unacceptable to the Minister as it was to them, they reconciled themselves to behaviour which removed a rival while it deprived them of a friend.

During these first weeks I had always present in my mind the consideration that I might attempt to get in touch with the girl who had gone by letter, or even that I might find out where she was and go to see her. The only reason I had for not doing so was

that I knew such an attempt would bring no benefit, and I knew it, not as a possible idea, but with an absolute conviction.

Something had happened on that evening which she could no more ignore than I could myself. In spite of what had happened she had made up her mind to go away. I was convinced that she acted of her own free will, and that I should know immediately this bar between us lifted. I should not need to be told. I should perceive it in the morning as I got out of bed.

Whether, if I had gone to see her the day after our meeting matters would have turned out differently, was the thought by which I was unceasingly tormented.

Often I took refuge in cynicism, telling myself that I had fulfilled the agreeable function of opening her heart to love, making it possible for her to go back and live happily with her husband.

Sometimes I argued to the opposite effect. To return had been an act of sacrifice on her part. Her divided nature had been at war, this time on a vaster scale. The battle of happiness and duty had been fought out once more, and for the moment I had lost. The time might come when the decision would be reversed.

Often I took comfort from the thought that she must be suffering as much as I was. No—more! I declared. This had been for her a unique, unparalleled experience, whereas my own life had been full of hints and presages. Nor could I see any reason why it might not contain other similar experiences in the future.

For a few weeks and by various expedients I was able to consider that I had adapted myself and the conditions under which I lived to one another. Besides, the happening itself absorbed me, and it was enough for a time to turn over each detail and circumstance inside myself.

My mistake was to attempt to come out of my seclusion. I had lived so long in the belief that women were necessary to a man's existence that I could not realise they had become, not merely unnecessary, but impossible for me.

The first time, therefore, I was aware of the impulse of desire, I went round to a house where I had been a frequent visitor, and asked for a girl with whom I had been many times before. I imagined that, though social entertainments and the company of intelligent women had become impossible, I could still take a mistress in the same way that soldiers visit brothels, or men who are obliged to live in desolate places sleep with native women.

By an evening of peculiar humiliation I was made aware of my mistake.

In the course of the night I had spent with this vanished girl her face, her figure and her gestures had become so engraved upon my mind, and so profoundly associated with the whole idea and act of love, that, when I attempted to approach another woman, an unbearable confusion started up inside my brain robbing me, not only of desire, but of the power to think or speak coherently. I was obliged to recover by myself, and then, upon a dull and labouring excuse, to take myself off as quickly as I could.

Following this experience I was driven finally back into my own society. And now matters began to move more quickly. My project had called up a dangerous imagination. Soon it was not only in relation to the act of love that the image I had raised assumed possession of my mind. It began to walk by day, and in the company of men.

I would recognise her in the street—not immediately beside me but a block or two ahead, just turning the next corner, just entering the shop across the road. Excusing myself to whomever I was with, I followed. I followed in this way a hundred women, into shops, and on to buses. I lost sight of them, I overtook them, passed them by, and let them go.

At first it was only those who bore some genuine resemblance that I followed—the square-shouldered and slim-hipped, the women with dark and neatly-parted hair, the hesitant and beautiful wives of the English doctor who does not go out into society.

But soon all that had changed. I found myself in pursuit of women who bore not the slightest resemblance to the one I sought. Overtaking them, I was amazed to discover that they were old, that they were bent, that their hair was white or grey, that I had no longer any idea why I was following them, nor what resemblance I had ever seen.

Sometimes, walking the streets and inhaling the faces of the people who passed by—for I had become acutely sensitive to faces and derived from a glance an impression of the whole being—I would receive the conviction that in a moment from now the one face I was seeking would appear.

Not, of course, the next face, but the tenth, the hundredth, the ten-thousandth face, would be the one. And I have continued

walking hour after hour, regardless of direction, to complete the toll my mind had fixed on as decisive.

Sometimes, at a crowded street corner or the angle of a busy square, the certainty would form inside me that if I only stayed watching, for five, for ten, for thirty minutes, she whom I sought was certain to come by this spot. I would invoke an insane mathematics to prove that everyone in the country must pass here at some time, and that she would be due to pass here now. So I watched for the time I had fixed, when it would be clear to me that it was the other side of the square where I should have been standing, on the steps beside the entrance to the Market.

Her voice, no less than her face, possessed me. I heard it over the next table in the restaurant. In the sudden silence at a wayside station it rang out from another carriage. It was the voice of the woman, now greeting her friend upon the platform, after my train had pulled away.

I heard it in the telephone. It did not speak to me directly. It was there in the background, taking part in the half-heard conversation between strangers—and I would ignore the person trying to address me, and strain my ears after talk I could not overhear.

Once, as I went home in the evening, her voice cried at me from a doorway, words in a foreign language which I could not catch.

I read her hand, which I had never seen, in every writing. I saw her name pasted up in hoardings, set up in type in the headlines of the newspapers. I found it copied out by myself in memoranda.

A further confusion arose from the fact that I remembered with peculiar clarity every sentence she had said to me, and above all every word connected with our love-making.

Such commonplace phrases as 'What do you want?' 'There is plenty of time,' 'You see, you are the first' had become for me lethal, charged with unbearable associations; and it was several times necessary for me to excuse myself at the office on the plea of anything or nothing when one of my colleagues fired one of these deadly expanding bullets unawares into my brain.

In the management of my daily life I became increasingly incoherent and capricious, for I never knew when I should feel impelled to go from one part of the town, and sometimes from one part of the country, to another. Though I shunned, so far as

possible, the society of those who knew me well, I did not avoid human beings. On the contrary.

Every place of public assembly had a momentary, irresistible attraction for me. I visited concerts, operas, first nights of theatre: choosing my seat for the view it gave me of the audience. I would attend, satisfied in my own mind that I should see her, that she would sit in the next row to mine, that we should meet and talk and everything would be immediately explained between us.

After a moment, however, even before I had looked round at my neighbours, it would become clear to me that she was not here, and there had never at any time been the slightest prospect of her being. I would get up from my seat and walk straight out. It had become impossible for me to remain any longer in the place, not merely because she was not there, but because the feelings inside me would, if I stayed, communicate themselves through me to everyone about.

My greatest protection, and my sole alternative interest at this time, was in the study I had taken up. Archæology and history being the province of the old, and in that country an almost entirely neglected province, I was able to show certain facts in a new light, to reconcile phenomena hitherto regarded as conflicting, to correlate certain archæological discoveries with historical tradition in a manner flattering to national pride.

I began to make, in this limited and deserted field, a small name for myself. More important to me than that, I stumbled across a particular problem which, for some reason, attracted me, and to which I gave a deep personal preoccupation, quite different from the mild distraction afforded to me by the subject as a whole. The problem which absorbed me in this way was the attempt to discover an underground passage which, according to legend, had once carried water from the heart of the city to a fortress outside. To the question of this tunnel, or underground passage, I applied myself as often as I was able, paying visits to libraries throughout the country in search of evidence that might bear on it.

It was in the course of one of these visits that I for the first time obtained some fraction of control over the impulses which possessed me.

It operated in this way. My researches required me to visit a particular monastery in a small port overlooking the Adriatic. I had been conscious previously of an impulse to visit the port,

believing it possible that the English doctor—cherishing that obsession with the sea so common among our countrymen—had settled there: and though I was under obligation never to pursue the woman to whom he was married, my whole life was ordered in the belief that it was permissible to place myself where, accidentally, we might meet.

The day on which I had arranged to visit the port had come—and with it the certainty that the place where she was at this moment to be found was here, within the capital, at a point in the main railway Terminus.

The argument was fierce. My existence, since our meeting, had been entirely governed by my impulses. My only hope of a meeting which reason told me was impossible lay in defying reason, and setting up a quite different standard for my conduct. If I abandoned now this other standard, such as it was, I must lose the hope it gave me and forfeit what I felt to be the right, and even sometimes the certainty, of seeing her.

Against that, I told myself that the place to which I was bound was one to which impulse had long directed me; that I was not flying in the face of my convictions, but rather acting them out—though not at the precise moment they held sway; that to reach the port it was necessary, in any case, to pass through the Terminus, which I could visit again on my return.

Above and beyond the argument, was the shadowy, unadmitted, hope of regaining sanity and the control of my own actions—even if it should cost me the one I hoped to find.

The compulsion to remain in the city was strong, but I resisted it. It was the first time I had done so. From that moment I was able at times to manœuvre matters within my mind so that the necessity to visit places, or to remain in them, coincided with other factors in my life. I was able to sit through the best part of a concert, and for two nights in succession remained within doors, instead of walking the streets as had become my custom.

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By the time I had reached this position, a period of something like two years had passed.

The first results of my researches had been published. They had been spoken and written of with approval, and I found myself invited to appear and lecture before the National Academy of Arts and Learning.

I was in two minds whether to accept this offer, for I thought it likely that the Minister would regard such activities as 'pushing.' To my surprise he congratulated me on the honour, which, he said, had brought credit on the Legation, and informed me that following the recall of the second secretary, he had actually written home urging that—in view of my unusual qualifications for work in this country—I should be appointed to his post.

The night of the meeting arrived, and I attended. There were four guests of honour, and each was to make a short speech on his own subject. I was to speak third. The man who spoke first was a general. He had, I believe, reorganised one of the nation's military colleges. In any case it was the custom for the Academy of Arts and Learning to pay its chief honours to a soldier, and he was the one to whom this year it had fallen.

The second man to speak was a doctor, one of the new school of psychic healers who had been heard of for the first time only a year or two before. He was a short man, youngish, with a dark moustache, and he spoke with assurance and a repetition of the same two or three gestures. I listened to him with interest, if not with complete agreement, until his speech was near its close. It was then, seated in court dress upon the platform, in the presence of the hundred Academy members, that I began to take in certain words which appeared to come from inside myself rather than from the man who spoke them, and which have remained with me ever since.

The lecturer had been explaining the methods upon which the new treatment had been founded. He detailed a number of cases to support his theory, explaining how he, or another of his colleagues, had resolved the confusion in a patient's mind, restoring to a serviceable life one for whom catastrophe seemed certain.

'To achieve success, however,' he went on, 'we must receive in full the patient's confidence. This is vital. As a rule our technique, and our knowledge of the inner workings of the patient's mind, suffice to secure this without difficulty. Very rarely this vital first step proves impossible—and then we may fairly assume that our advice has been sought too late.'

I may instance the wife of a man with whom I had been acquainted as a student. She was a lady of considerable beauty, in a position to set her free from financial worries, living contentedly with her husband. Those who had known her from childhood

considered her as a woman of a placid nature. Her husband, in a curious phrase, described her as being "not entirely awake". It would be hard to imagine a woman more unlike what is considered the typical neurotic.

Yet at a certain point, a point connected so far as her friends knew with no external happening, a shadow appeared to fall across her existence. She became liable to long fits of depression. Occasionally, and even as it seemed against her will, she would be seized with storms of weeping.

The most peculiar feature of her malady was that the victim felt herself under a compulsion to go at certain times to certain places, sometimes to a place at opposite ends of the country. Again, having remained indoors for three days on end, she would be driven upon impulse to attend a concert or a theatre—which she would leave, as likely as not, before the performance had begun.

I was called in to advise, but found it difficult to get on terms with my patient. She seemed, like people in the first stages of possession, to hug her malady to her—yet she was anxious to avoid any break in her ordinary life, and when it was suggested that she should leave the country and go home, she resisted the proposal almost with violence. She gave the appearance of waiting for something which her remarkably strong moral nature forbade her to bring about, or hasten on. Neither with myself nor with her family was she willing even to embark on a discussion of what troubled her. She declared that she regretted the inconvenience she caused, but that it was something outside her power to avoid.

Finally, after much persuasion, she was induced to leave the country. The day before her departure, instead of seeing her friends or attending to her affairs, she insisted on going to a main line terminus, where she waited throughout the day for something which apparently did not occur. She disappeared from the steamer on the way back to her own country. . . .

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In the years that have passed since I attended the annual ceremony of the Academy of Arts and Learning, I have risen to a high place in my profession. A detachment from personal convenience, the ability, which I retain, to perceive a person's character and intentions from his face, coupled with an uncommon gift for languages, have carried me into many parts of the world and

forward into a number of important posts. I have been Minister to several Courts which have since disappeared. I have been entrusted with a variety of confidential missions. Two publishers have written to me for a volume of my memoirs. I am now approaching the retiring age. Ten years more, and I must expect to approach my grave.

This affects me for one reason only. I believe, though without certain knowledge, that I am the last human being who recalls at all clearly, or remembers with any deep concern, the wife of the English doctor residing in a certain Balkan capital in about the year 1910. She came of a family with whom she had little sympathy. Her father and mother have been dead for a generation. Her only brother vanished in the war previous to this one. Her husband removed many years ago to America, where he made a name for himself as a specialist in diseases of the heart. The Frenchwoman and the Russian lady are both dead. The society in which they shone has been grass before the storm of a dozen crises and depressions. The house where we met has been pulled down to accommodate a barracks. The wheels have long fallen from the cab which carried us to her home, in a part of the city which has been annexed by another nation.

The shape of the world changes, and the covering of its surface changes, the people who inhabit the surface disappear. With them their memories vanish too. A single generation is enough to obliterate all record. Two generations—and even remembrance may be gone. The memories of those who wish to recall, betray them. Already perhaps there is no one in the world who remembers the wife of the English doctor, except me; and I remember her only dimly; and I shall not remember her for long.

FORTHCOMING FEATURES

Martin Turnell on 'Baudelaire'; Alan Pryce-Jones on 'Hawthorne'; Peter Quennell on 'Style'; K. J. Raine on 'Yeats'; Melville on 'Masson'; John Rothenstein on 'Modern American Painters'; Arturo Barea on 'Hemingway and Malraux in Spain'; Stories by Ithell Colquhoun, Patrick Kirwan, Elizabeth Bowen and Antonia White; 'Democracy', by A. L. Rowse; 'Literature', by Herbert Read; 'War into Europe', by Hugh Slater, and 'Reminiscences of Virginia Woolf' by T. S. Eliot and others.

RE-INTRODUCING COSTALS

By CATHERINE ANDRASSY

AFTER reading Calder-Marshall's *Introducing Costals*, as when listening to the various discussions on this character of Montherlant's, I again realized what a strange fascination he exercises on the imagination of Englishmen.

A scene some many years ago on the beach of Le Touquet came back to me. We were a crowd of young and not happy people. Even youth, health and the absence of material worries do not necessarily imply happiness. Each of us had an unsolved or unsatisfactorily solved love problem. We were basking semi-consciously in the sun after a strenuous gambling night at the casino, gathering fresh energy for the following one. We had consumed several cocktails at the bar, and intended doing the same very soon again. Variety and imagination are not the characteristics of high life. 'We' consisted of a lovely gazelle-eyed brunette from New-York, who at the time was enjoying the favours of a High Royal personage, an American millionaire, race-stable owner, famous for not knowing about horses—the son of an English peer, a Spanish Grandee with the features of an ascete, who spent a month of the year in the seclusion of a monastery to expiate his sins, which I gather were numerous—a voluptuous-looking Russian princess and myself. The voluptuous-looking princess was lying flat on her back with her eyes shut, in a highly seductive bathing-suit. Her face was made up with the last artifices of sophistication, her upwards bound and over-emphasized eyelashes were stuck with the skill of perfect craftsmanship to her blued eyelids. The probability of her getting into the water was out of the question. Her face and limbs were covered all over with a shiny thin oil, which endowed her skin with the sparkling lustre of wet bronze. The American millionaire, whose passion for her was one of the topics of the cosmopolitan world, was staring at her shiny body with the harassed and concentrated look of a man in pain. Love, alcohol and the sun gave his face an apoplectic aspect. We lay in silence. Suddenly

the American jumped up and without warning kicked the sand with all the force of his bare foot into the perfectly polished faces of the princess. It entered her parted lips, eyes, nostrils, neck and hair. It stuck relentlessly to the oil, forming nasty brown patches. We sat horror-stricken, trying to act as if nothing had happened. The victim who had been dozing sat up dazzled, then probably having grasped what happened, gave the American a devastating look of deadly contempt which was most impressive, having no eyes to use for the purpose. Then with nothing left of her glamorous make-up, silently and with an aloof smile, she walked with great dignity into the sea. It was a most painful sight. Not daring to look at the American we started a forced conversation. We saw his subdued, muscular back following her into the water. The Englishman did not miss the occasion to propose a drink. After having had several he turned to me and, in a half whisper between his teeth: 'I do admire that chap for his guts. If only I could manage to get over the silly prejudices of my education, and about women in general, and could only once have the courage of kicking sand into their lovely faces, I would be a different man.'

I cannot help thinking that the attraction Costals exercises on men derives from the fact that in general men, especially Englishmen, fundamentally dislike women, and grudge them the humiliation of not being able to get on without them. Bullied, terrorized, frustrated they still have to put up with them. For the last twenty years even public life, which in the past had been a guarantee for safety, has been infected by them. Men feel grateful towards Costals, to have revenged them for all the humiliations their pride had to suffer. Envious of his 'goujateries', they admire this Knight of St. George, who has drawn his pen to debunk the female dragon. It is evidently the greatest proof of Montherlant's mastery of style and persuasion, that he makes us accept:

1. That Costals is a new type of the Master-man, the dominating male, the personification of the male principle.
2. That he gave any sort of new valuation to the standard of women, or any proof of their mental or spiritual inferiority.
3. That he created a new attitude, a neo-psycho-philosophical relationship between the sexes. That 'Costalitis' should give us a deeper insight into the game of love.

In my opinion Costals is an essentially feminine type, having much in common with those frigid coquettes who, incapable of pleasure, find mental satisfaction in the rousing, through all possible artifices, the desire of men which they do not satisfy. They pass their time in the sterile and vain search of new sensations. What genuine man with the talent of Costals would waste his energy in answering the love letters of unknown, plain females from the province, and playing with them the game of 'cat and mouse'? His endeavour to make us believe that he is free from women is not convincing, for through the space of four volumes his sole and main interest lies in them, all the while naively concealed under the pretext of religious, psychological, sexual experience. Weak and unsure of himself, most probably physically deficient, he needs the proof of his strength in the sufferings of his victims, for if he did not doubt himself what need would he have for the contest?

As a typical French bourgeois, he wisely takes no risks, and tries his power on those whom he is certain to vanquish. His choice is most carefully selected, he would not risk the shame of defeat at the hands of an equally attractive and intelligent woman. He finds his suitable victims in an ugly old maid, who in the deadly boredom of a provincial town, falls for the well-known writer, who, in the glamour of his fame, finds time to answer her love epistles; in the rather dull and pathetic daughter of a well-to-do bourgeois family, whom he seduces; in a Jewish cocotte; in an Arab harem girl; and in a half-witted religious maniac, whom he deliberately, and with satanic skill, drives to suicide. Who on earth would have chosen such a collection? After having entertained us during four volumes with the sighs and moans of these most unattractive and very much under the average females he concludes—with the aid of wishful thinking and the total oblivion of the famous French logic, and his specially cherished clear-sightedness—on the entire sex in general, that all women are born slaves to the Master-man, and as these wretched creatures are only too willing to be ill-treated by him, that all women of France, Europe, and the world would be the same. The essentially feminine character of Costals reveals itself most clearly in the desire he has of changing his women from the pursued into the pursuer—the purely male instinct of the hunter being foreign to him—he hunts for the purpose of enjoying eventually the

pleasure of being chased, besieged, and raped in return. He wants the woman to cast aside her reserve and adopt the rôle of the aggressor. As his poorly chosen-partners can't play up to these subtleties he turns against them with the fury of the unsatisfied. He feels cheated, deluded and *faute de mieux* takes up the opposite attitude, over-emphasizing the male principle. Can there be anything more unpleasant than to be pursued by a woman whom one no more loves, and who has lost her self-control? As unfortunately this does happen at times, men do their best not to provoke it. It is only the pathetic Costals who puts himself out to obtain this result. The typical test of the feeble. The female who enjoys the degradation of the male. The notorious women who are legion, vamps and cinemasters, the Marlène 'blue-angel', the circus-rider who in boots and spurs cracks her whip over the backs of the lions, and even women who shoot their husbands—have their letter-boxes bursting with love declarations, marriage proposals. The attraction of danger, the enjoyment of being a victim is not unknown. Pierre Louy's *Femme et le Pantin* scene reminds one of that of Solange hidden behind the curtain and the victim Andrée, having to endure the torment that her platonic lover will go to bed with the girl behind the curtain as soon as she has left. A most crude and disagreeable scene. The kinder ones use the whip if such stimulation is necessary. But who would ever dare to generalize and conclude as to the inferiority of the male sex? Costals in his naive insolence goes as far as to doubt that such a thing as a beautiful and clever woman does exist. Having never seen a whale or a mango-tree, I might deny their existence.

The whole process which Montherlant, and especially his admirers, think original is one only too well known, and most common-place. It is the classic procedure of the rise and fall of love affairs, the breaking down of feminine resistance, the cooling off, when there are no more defences to destroy. *En amour il y a toujours un qui tend la joue*. Costals' clear-sightedness, of which he is so proud, is due to self-detachment. Detachment is a piece of luck, and has nothing to do with superiority.

There is no analogy whatsoever between Lawrence and Montherlant. Lawrence's phallic consciousness is totally foreign to any sort of decadent perversity or sadism. His is a return to a deeper, perhaps more primitive physiological superiority of the

male, without the necessity of the stimulant of erotic intellectualism. Lawrence's men and women have a deeper awareness towards the vital sources of life and nature. They are silent, tender and reserved, deeply moral in contrast to the cerebral, erotic, degenerate Costals and his over-sexed unsatisfied women.

Costals is valuable from a different point of view. He is the typical Parisian bourgeois intellectual of the last twenty years, that sterile degenerate '*entre les deux guerres*' phenomenon, of which, unfortunately, there was no scarcity. A little less clever, less fascinating, less insolent, equally caddish, equally proud of the pure fact of being a male. The self-centred, disruptive utilitarianism, basically anti-social, turning all values to the same common denominator 'will I profit by it?' The fear of being involved, of losing the comforts and the security of an egoistic life, the deep philosophy of selfishness *à outrance, le chacun pour soi et le Dieu* (in whom no one believes) *pour tous*, is not only the 'strong man' Costals' privilege, but the curse which has ruined and destroyed France. The Costals, the French bourgeois, take risks neither in love, in business nor in battle; two pennies to-day are more valuable than the uncertainty of a hundred to-morrow; his clear-sightedness preserves him from the risks of emotional generosity. Solange's heavy chin is his safety valve. The fear of personal suffering can't provide the impulse to fight the invader. War for the soldier is not a hundred per cent security. War implies risks; one may be killed, and death is stupid. Costals' clear-sightedness tells him that nothing matters more than life, for death puts an end to all individual appreciation. I will never forget the expression of a small 'Brunet' on hearing that a friend of his family had faced the bullets of the Garde Nationale, on the memorable 6th February on the Boulevards: *Quel idiot de risquer sa vie, la vie, la vie qui est tout*, and his face of seven had the look of an aged man!

In a magical way the Costals synthesise skin-deep sensuality for passion, 'do to others what you would *not* want others to do to you,' for Christian love, mistrust; and suspicion for comradeship and mutual-respect. The Poincaré-policy of after the war. Solange has to be converted into a Turkish scarf, for only used as a handkerchief or a pair of drawers could she be trusted. In this capacity she would not attempt to have an independent life. The Costals will only fight a man weaker than themselves. A man can't be

kicked safely, only when he is down, concludes the clean sightedness and logic of Costals.

His assault on marriage and on the moral standards in general is the outcome of his stagnant belief in them. It is the attraction of the *messe noire*, the fascination of sacrilege. Without belief there is nothing to profane. He respects the family as only a Frenchman, a Jew, a Patriarch can. He believes in the necessity of woman's virtue, that is why he sets his mind to destroy it. 'Every man kills the thing he loves.' This same attraction for sacrilege lies at the bottom of the works of the great moralists and religious writer, Gide: *L'Immoraliste*, *Les Faux monnayeurs*, *La Porte Etroite*, and many others. He understands better than anyone else what it means to French parents if their daughter has been seduced, compromised and not offered matrimony, specially when the man is wealthy. With fiendish pleasure he therefore tramples on the feelings and prejudices of the modest Dandillet family, with the sure knowledge that the 'fall' of their daughter has made them accept any conditions. If he were Solange's father he would, out of moral indignation, fling his daughter on the street and in the gutter, naturally keeping the 'dot' to himself. Costals seems to me as much dated as that unfortunate country which produced him, and which during the lapse of twenty years contemplated with utter self-satisfaction and without the slightest comprehension of what was happening in the world, the aspect of its navel. It was therefore not in the least surprising that at the final contest, the bourgeois hero was incapable of resisting the Nazi heel. In the encounter with the super-male (war and strife are the male prerogatives) the Costals who could only defeat the Andrées and the Solanges had a poor chance. In the arms of their flat-headed slave-masters, their women will find more gratification (although the new masters will make less fuss about this sort of conquest than their predecessors). In any case our Don Juan need not retire to the East to-day, to exercise his power over women, he can just go as far as Paris and Berlin to rejoice over the unhampered principle of manhood at its full swing, a principle which not very long ago was that of the whole world. Werth, in *The Last Days of Paris*, describes the women of France in a constant stream of tears. Who could blame them?

Costals has an uneasy resemblance to a character of Aldous

Huxley's last novel, the Earl of Gonnister, whose extreme clear-sightedness and intelligence made him find a way of outwitting death. He is found after three hundred years in a subterranean dungeon of his own castle, where ape-like, covered with long thick hair, he lives a completely satisfied existence in the company of his mate (Solange) whom, for the sake of cheering up the monotony of love-making, he savages and beats at intervals.

Intelligence, it seems to me, is not enough.

CATHERINE ANDRASSY

LETTER

To the Editor

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Calder-Marshall seems to be fascinated, though half disgusted, with the character of Pierre Costals. I do not think there is anything fascinating about Costals at all, the reason being that it is impossible to visualise him as a great writer. Directly it is realised that Montherlant, through Costals, is second-rate as an artist (however profound his insight on occasions), the whole character of vanity and cruelty becomes merely unpleasant.

Costals is the professional abortionist of emotions; directly they begin to develop he kills them as quickly as possible. Why? So that he can be free to be a writer. But if he is not a great writer the neurosis is all that remains, and it is one which becomes more boring in each volume. The vain egotist deliberately chooses an attractive woman who is stupid and an intellectual woman who is plain, so that he can continue his rôle as a woman-hater with no doubts. It is, of course, an absurd fallacy that intelligent attractive women do not exist. They can be found, just as intelligent attractive men can be found. The painful hate of the other sex by man or woman can be swallowed when the hater is a genius, but should be indulged in only among homosexuals when the artist is as mediocre as Montherlant.

D. W.

HORIZON'S QUESTIONNAIRE

WITH every copy of the January issue a questionnaire was enclosed. It was hoped that readers would let us know by this method something about themselves, about their likes and dislikes and something of what they thought of *Horizon*. They have. Nearly twenty per cent. of them have replied. Such a return is extremely high compared with that for the average questionnaire survey when the consumer is not contacted by personal interview or telephone. It shows exceptional interest in and affection for the magazine generally. The percentage of subscribers who filled in the questionnaire was higher than for all readers, being as much as thirty per cent. This is, of course, only to be expected. It indicates one of the weaknesses of the results as a strictly accurate revelation of the information about readers as a whole. Those readers returning the questionnaire were probably a little more interested in the magazine than those who did not.¹ The questionnaire gave equal opportunity to those who wanted to criticize as well as to praise. As people did not have to give their names and addresses it is probable that the replies are both frank and honest. Nevertheless, the fact that all readers did not fill in the questionnaire, and that the one-fifth who did do not constitute a truly random sample, should be borne in mind when reading the figures which follow.

How old are Horizon Readers?

Over 40 per cent. are between 20 and 30 years of age. Nearly another 30 per cent. are between 30 and 40, leaving only about 15 per cent. under 20 and 15 per cent. over 40.

Are they Men or Women?

Three-quarters of *Horizon* readers are men. This is in remarkable contrast to the readership of magazines as a whole. Women dominate the readership not only of the popular magazines but

¹ Of all those filling in the questionnaire, 43 per cent. were subscribers, 49 per cent. were regular readers, and only 8 per cent. occasional readers.

also of most of the big circulation daily newspapers. What can be the reason for *Horizon's* appeal to masculinity? Does it show a stronger cultural sense among young men?

Are Horizon Readers married or single? Or divorced?

Two-thirds are not married. This proportion is roughly the same in the case of both men and women. This may partly be accounted for by the youth of the readers. Many may not be old enough to marry. It may also be partly due to a certain disregard for the conventions of marriage and the number of marriages which have ended in divorce (the few divorces were counted as unmarried), both of which are more prevalent in this age group than amongst older people.

How rich are they? And how poor?

The families of half of *Horizon* readers have an income between £200 and £500 per annum; those of another quarter between £500 and £1,000. So on the whole they are mainly middle or lower middle class. Only 16 per cent. of *Horizon* families are well-off (over £1,000 a year), while 10 per cent. have incomes of the working class level (under £4 a week).

This is of course very far from being a national average. Three-quarters instead of 10 per cent. of the families would need to be in the lowest income group if that were so. But 60 per cent. of the families do receive less than £500 a year, which is enough answer to those who jibe that so-called 'high-brow, leftist, cultural publications' are only read by an insignificant group of comfortably-off intellectuals, and that such publications are completely out of touch with the man-in-the-street income groups.

What do Horizon Readers do?

The occupations of readers are not, of course, the same now as they were before the war. About 17 per cent. of readers are now in the Forces or engaged in full-time Civil Defence work. But this is not the largest vocational group. Virtually a fifth of the readers are in the teaching profession, either in schools or in universities. This is one of the most remarkable features of *Horizon* readership. It presumably reflects the interest of this profession in English composition and in developments in this field. *Horizon* has, in fact, been distributed in the classrooms of more than one public school for purposes of discussion.

Eight per cent. of readers are students (not schoolboys!) and eight per cent. are civil servants. Other occupations vary widely and include clerks and farmers, writers and engineers, parsons and accountants, librarians and businessmen, chemists and secretaries, members of the book trade and nursing profession, housewives and policemen.

The analysis of pre-war occupations shows differences mainly because of the wartime absorption of people in the Forces and Civil Defence Services and in the Civil Service. The proportion in the teaching profession in peace-time is even higher. As many as a quarter of readers fall into this group. Twelve per cent. are students and about six per cent. civil servants. The clerical group was high with eight per cent. and writing had seven per cent. The remaining occupations covered as wide a field as during wartime.

How Loyal are Horizon Readers?

We asked if readers would be willing to pay 1s. 6d. for *Horizon* if it were necessary to raise the price as a result of increased paper and printing costs. Some may have been rash with their promises. No method has yet been discovered by social scientists and opinion research statisticians to estimate the exact relationship between what people say, or think they will do when a hypothetical situation is placed before them, and what they actually will do when faced with the situation. Nevertheless roughly 70 per cent. of readers said they would pay 1s. 6d. Nearly a quarter said they would under certain conditions or weren't sure. Less than ten per cent. refused. So even if we distrust the word of all who gave conditional or doubtful 'yesses' the proportion who need *Horizon* enough to pay a 50 per cent. increase in price is only a little short of three-quarters.

How did Readers first hear of Horizon?

Here is another remarkable figure. As many as 42 per cent. heard of it from the *New Statesman* (either from an advertisement or from an editorial mention). No other publication was of the slightest relative importance. All other publications *together* were instrumental in informing only 16 per cent. of readers. The next most important source was through a friend, which accounts for 23 per cent. of readers. Fifteen per cent. of readers first heard of it through seeing copies on a bookstall or in a bookshop. This indicates the importance of the physical characteristics of the magazine

(which was one of the main things liked about *Horizon* generally) and especially of the layout and design of the cover. Only four per cent. were informed by means of the circular which *Horizon* mailed to lists of likely subscribers when the magazine was launched. The three important sources, therefore, were the *New Statesman* (42 per cent.), friends (23 per cent.), and display at the point of sale (15 per cent.). When the figures relating to the *New Statesman* are analysed further it is shown that 24 per cent. of readers were informed of it by an advertisement, 15 per cent. by editorial mention and three per cent. by both, or one or the other—they could not remember which. Thus *Horizon* came to the notice of more people through advertisements alone in the *New Statesman* than through friends, and as many people through editorial mention alone in that publication as through seeing it displayed.

What do Readers want less of?

More readers wanted less *articles on politics and affairs* than wanted less of any other type of contribution voted on. Nevertheless this was not a majority opinion, being only 36 per cent. of readers. Next least popular classification was *book reviews*, of which 29 per cent. would like less. *Articles on music* followed it fairly closely with 25 per cent. wanting reduction.¹ *Short stories* were not far behind with 21 per cent. disapproving of the amount of space given to them, while 17 per cent. wanted less articles on *art*. Only 15 per cent. wanted less *poetry* and 12 per cent. less *articles on poets and poetry*. Those who wanted less articles on *writers and writing* were a mere eight per cent.

What do Readers want more of?

It is interesting to compare the foregoing proportions wanting less with those voting for more of the same contribution categories. The figures show a confirmatory reversal of ranking. Thus while it was the smallest group of readers who wanted less *articles on writers and writing*, it was the largest who wanted more. While the proportion which wanted less *politics and affairs* was the highest, that which wanted more of them was the lowest. The significant point to note is that the proportions wanting more of the various groups are much larger than those wanting less. Thus,

¹ There have been two articles on music.—*Editor*.

whereas there was no *majority* wanting less of any of the groups 57 per cent. did want more *articles on writers and writing*, 48 per cent. on *Poets and Poetry*, 42 per cent. on *Art*.

What do Readers want the same amount of?

The proportion of readers who are satisfied with the amount of space allotted to the various categories vary only between 47 per cent. and 35 per cent. (averaging at 41 per cent.).

The two types of contribution about which people are most satisfied are *poetry* and *short stories*. The proportion in both cases is 47 per cent. of voters.

Summarizing the figures on wanting more, the same and less of the various types of contributions, it can be repeated that the average proportion wanting more of something is 39 per cent., that satisfied is 41 per cent. and that wanting less of something is 20 per cent. Not a bad showing.

The answers as to what readers liked about the magazine, considering the great amount of entries, were surprisingly unanimous. To go into them would, however, savour of that complacent bonhomie between editor and reader which is irritating to others. The last three numbers of *Horizon* sold out in a fortnight. If more copies can be printed it will not be necessary to raise the price, which will only be done if we have to continue production at an uneconomic level, and then as a last resource. All the 'dislikes' have, however, been read and noted.